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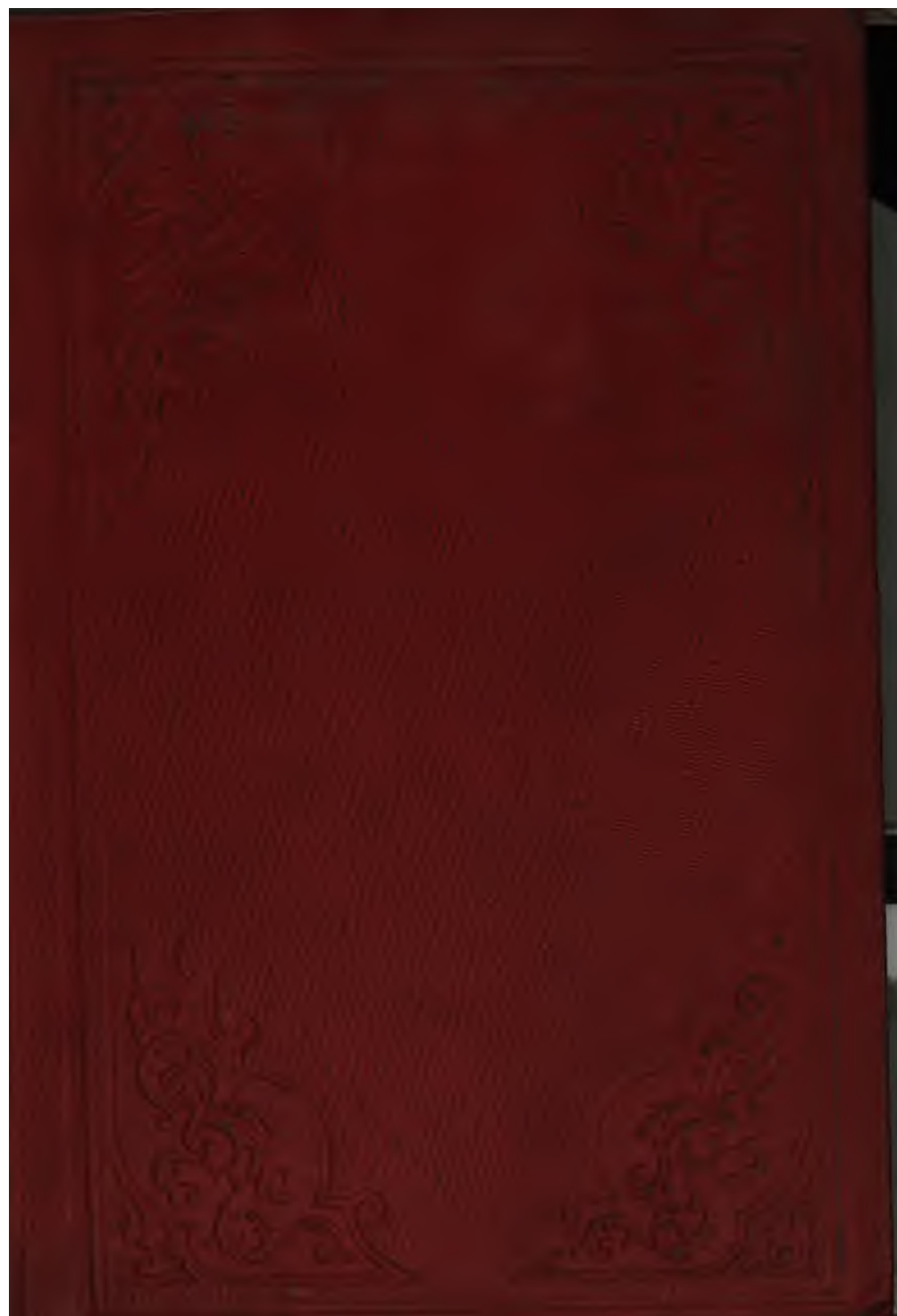
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THE EXILE;

OR,

A Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

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OR,

A Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

BY

PHILIP PHOSPHORUS.



LONDON:

THOMAS BOSWORTH, 215, REGENT STREET

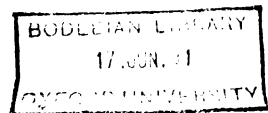
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Preface.

A COMPILER of an ingenious book of anecdotes commences his introductory address to the public thus :

" A Preface is useful everywhere,
A sort of literary *avant courier*."

As a young writer, I have no desire to dissent from established precedents, and therefore, at the risk of being considered the possessor of antiquated ideas, I have thought it necessary to annex a brief explanation to the following pages, with the view of elucidating their object.

Of the numerous writers, past and present, of which not only England but the world is proud, it seems to me (although at best my judgment is but fallible) that few have devoted their powerful pens to a consideration of the institutions and habits of our Continental neighbours at the period of my tale—a period when the glow which chivalry threw over barbarous practices and principles was fast vanishing, and men (to borrow an elegant expression) began to awake to the commonplace realities of life.

The above assertion may seem more bold than correct to a reader of the classic and graphic pages of *Quentin Durward*,

One in a Thousand, or *Crichton*; but I would submit, that in those deeply interesting volumes, attention is drawn, and that in no ordinary manner, rather to the habits of one particular race than to a more cursory, general survey of national institutions. Not that I compete with the writers of those instructive works of fiction: I grudge them not the reputation they have deservedly obtained. It does not fall to the lot of every one to be possessed of the powers of delineation which each of these works claims for its author; and I am content in a humbler capacity to administer to the wants of the well-educated thousands who compose the British nation. To that nation whom Louis Kossuth did well to call "great and generous," I submit the succeeding Tale, trusting that an excuse may be provided for the many errors and anachronisms I am sensible it contains, in the magnitude of the subject undertaken, the difficulty of obtaining the information to be thereby imparted, and the circumstance of no other assistance being rendered an inexperienced author in its preparation than that of a companion in younger days, to whom he begs his grateful acknowledgments.

Should any of my readers, by a perusal of *The Exile*, be led to a feeling of greater devotion to a country where arbitrary banishments are unknown—where civil commotions are happily of very rare occurrence—where no inquisitorial tribunal restricts and oppresses religious liberty—and where justice may be obtained, not only impartially, but speedily,—I have not written in vain, and the *limæ, labor, et mora* bestowed upon my humble production have not been altogether thrown away.

P. P.

December, 1854.

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THE EXILE;

OR,

A Tale of the Sixteenth Century.

CHAPTER I.

The *Dramatis Personæ*, and introductory outlines of the Plot.

It was towards the evening of a fine day, at the close of the year 1572, that a mounted and armed man might be seen emerging from the little wood which surrounded the castle of Hardfels, in a district which we will call Kielsworth, in the then Margravate of Baden. Like to the steed he bestrode, the traveller's well-knit limbs showed him to be possessed of great muscular power; and the ease with which he managed his spirited courser proved him to be no novice in the art of horsemanship; and, indeed, few of his neighbours could compete with the Baron of Hardfels (for he it was) in that manly exercise.

Arrived at the castle gate, he blew a lusty blast on the horn, which, in pursuance of the customs of his forefathers, hung by a chain from the portal. An aged porter instantly answered the summons, and slipped back the massive bolts with a zeal and alacrity which showed that he did not wish to bring down on his head the angry words of his impatient lord.

As soon as the Baron entered the hall, a page sprang forward to assist him in removing his equipments. This operation com-

pleted, the Baron was now attired in a more peaceful garb than that in which we first introduced him, and the change showed to better advantage his noble figure. His countenance, though handsome, was stern and commanding, and the searching glance of his full hazel eye seemed in no wise to be diminished by age. It also betokened possession of great reasoning powers, and of indomitable courage and resolution. He might have seen some fifty revolutions of the seasons, at least.

Having thus briefly described the exterior of this individual, let us give the reader a clearer insight into his character than that revealed by his manly physiognomy. By his courage and skill in the field, as well as his clear-sighted counsel in the camp and cabinet, he was deservedly esteemed by his sovereign, the Margrave of Baden, who always regarded him with feelings of attachment. The Margrave knowing him also to be one of his staunchest adherents, he was entrusted with his master's secrets and private commissions, and performed the offices of a secretary of state of after-times. Occupying so prominent a position in society, and being nearly always engaged either at the little court of his immediate sovereign, or in attendance upon the Emperor of Germany, with whom he was also a favourite, he had little time to devote to his paternal and domestic duties, which, however, were ably discharged by his faithful confessor, Father Clement, a man in every way qualified for the task.

His possessions were large and numerous, and he was by far the wealthiest noble for miles round, the Count of Würmer only excepted. Wealthy as he was, he was far from happy; and though sometimes his face was lit up with a joy peculiar to itself, this sudden transition soon changed to an expression of monotony, and sometimes even sadness. It was often supposed that it was owing to the death of his wife, who survived their marriage but a few years, that the latter part of his life was so embittered. His grief, however, for the loss of his amiable consort was greatly decreased by the enjoyment he received in watching the rising grace and talents of his son and daughter, who will severally undergo description in an after part of our tale.

"I expect the Baron of Würmer here shortly; tell Bertram

to admit him instantly," said the Baron to his attendant; and mind thee, youth, treat him with all due courtesy."

"Your command shall be promptly obeyed, my lord," said the youth, with a respectful bow.

"Is your young master yet returned?" continued the Baron.

"Master William is not yet returned;—but he is not my master; I obey none other than yourself," said the attendant, haughtily.

"Fine words for one in your situation; but, mark me, you obey whom I desire you, sirrah," said the Baron, angrily. "But," muttered he, "it is as well he is not here."

The reader must not picture to himself, in the present scene of our story, a castle armed at all points, like those of which we read in the pages of chivalry. It was a sort of compromise between the castle of feudal ages and the manorial residences of the present day. The lofty hall in which this short conversation passed between the master and servant was bedecked with helmets, morions, and other pieces of defensive and offensive armour, not unmingled with those of sylvan sport. At the feet of Hardfels crouched two gigantic specimens of the ancient wolf-hound, who wagged their tails and evinced other demonstrations of canine joy at the sight of their old master. In short, it was a perfect model of the castle-hall of the period, for the proprietor, who had a great reverence for the antique, suffered it to remain in almost the same state in which the death of his father left it. Pieces of clumsy armour, some of which dated back as far as to be reported to have belonged to the founder of this powerful family, were laid by on rude shelves with venerated care. Here and there were suspended jesses, hoods, and other paraphernalia of falconry,—a sport to which both father and son were devotedly attached. Lastly, on the further side of the room there hung the trusty coat of mail which belonged to the Baron's father, with one of brighter steel and more modern make, that had often served the present Baron well in the many combats in which he was engaged.

Scarcely had Hardfels retired from the hall ere another blast of the horn announced his expected guest, who, according to the Baron's commands, was immediately ushered into the noble

ment usually devoted by Hardfels (who, notwithstanding his reverence for ancestral customs, could not altogether divest himself of a regard for state) to the transaction of private business. This spacious room was hung with tapestry, and on the walls were suspended a few pictures, chiefly portraits of the former masters of the castle. Here and there, however, was one which recorded the prowess or wisdom of some member of the Hardfels' family.

The Baron of Würmer was a tall, muscular man, aged nearly thirty. His look was keen and searching, his brow was dark and frowning, and, had it not been for a certain forbidding expression, his countenance would have been decidedly handsome. He was an only son, and partook largely of the vices of his father. When very young, he had the misfortune to lose his mother, a most amiable and exemplary woman, whose death was believed to have been hastened, if not occasioned, by the brutality of her husband. The duty, therefore, of educating and training the young Würmer fell upon the surviving parent, who most shamefully neglected his charge. He was suffered to live in the most unbridled dissipation and licentiousness; and the only instruction he received since his mother's death was from the old servants of his father,—chiefly in deeds of arms and horsemanship, in the latter of which he was an adept. For a long time the young Baron turned a deaf ear to the remonstrances of such of his advisers as retained any regard for decency; but at length these faithful monitors flattered themselves that their entreaties had produced some effect on the volatile youth. His former companions were dismissed, and a general reformation of conduct was hoped for: great, however, was the disappointment of those who had indulged in any such hopes, for it soon became evident that the change which came over the young Würmer was more the result of policy than principle. Finding it necessary, as many similar characters have done, to preserve at least some appearance of rectitude, the former prodigal entirely gave up his late pursuits, and, under the specious garb of integrity, betook himself to the equally pernicious course of amassing wealth and endeavouring to acquire influence, acting upon the principle referred to by Lord Chesterfield, of getting money, honestly if possible, but, at any rate, getting money. Possessing great, though

untrained, natural abilities, consummate self-control, and a wonderful aptitude for intrigue, he succeeded almost beyond his hopes in his newly adopted career. To convey in a few words a just idea of his character, we may say that, had sound principles been carefully instilled into his mind, and fostered by example at an earlier time, he might, and in all probability would, have been a distinguished ornament of society; but, in the absence of these, revenge, suspicion, treachery, and a thousand evil passions, took possession of his breast. His father, moreover (who, being of a penurious habit, could only have tolerated his excesses either from indolence or from the Spartan-like idea of disgusting his son with the expenses and consequences, if not with the innate evil, of vice), lent him every assistance in the accomplishment of his designs. The legitimate desire of preserving an honest position in society had, in the case of both father and son, degenerated into a selfishness and avarice which led them to adopt the most unprincipled methods to satiate their ambitious and rapacious spirits. With a view to self-aggrandizement, young Würmer had made proposals to his powerful neighbour, Hardfels, for the hand of his daughter; and the manner in which he conducted, and the means by which he promoted, his suit, will form one of the chief topics of our tale. Having obtained the unwilling concurrence of the father—how, we shall hereafter explain—the favoured admirer was now come to make his proposals in person to the object of his affection, if such, indeed, his motives might be termed.

By his side there hung an enormous sword, which seemed by its looks to have seen some service; for, much as Würmer disliked to expose himself to danger, urgent necessity frequently compelled him to resort to arms. This and a small and beautifully chased dagger were the only arms which he carried. His dress consisted of a doublet of sombre-coloured cloth, of trunk breeches of a dark olive green, and hose of the same colour; a hat with a black feather completed his costume. After the customary greetings had been interchanged, Würmer, who from his previous habits of life was not so well versed in etiquette as his more refined companion, began thus abruptly:

“According to your wish,” said he, “I now come to ask your

daughter's consent to the match about which both my father and myself have so often consulted you. You know that rough men, like me, do not deal in soft flattery; a few words to the point are much better, in my humble opinion."

"I scarcely know the girl's own opinion on the subject," said Hardfels. "In one or two conversations I have had with her, she has dropped sentences which were decidedly adverse to the alliance. But in a few months things may take a better turn."

"A few months!" rejoined the other, in amazement.

"Yes," said Hardfels, scarcely restraining a smile at the other's astonishment; "you have not been much at court, Würmer, or you would have known a woman's heart better. I devoted many of my younger days to the service of the fair sex, and I found that it required time to overcome their prejudices. I have brought up Bertha with as much simplicity as possible; but although she is entirely ignorant of court practices, she is not to be led like a child;—whatever my private wishes may be, I cannot force her against her will."

"Had I a daughter, she should obey me, or"——

"What?" said Hardfels.

"Death should be the consequence!" said Würmer, sternly. "A dead child is better than a disobedient one."

"But how could I force my darling Bertha to a life of such misery as to compel her to be your bride, in opposition to her inclination?" said the Baron, sorrowfully.

"What!" said the other; "do you mean to imply that I should not make her a good husband? At any rate, however, willing or unwilling, marry me she must!"

"Well," said Hardfels in a soothing tone, "no endeavours on my part shall be wanting to induce her to alter her resolution; but, from the determination of her character, I fear my pleading will be in vain."

"Nay," exclaimed the Baron of Würmer, "determination is no fault. The wife of a German chief should be able to defend a castle, or, if occasion required, to lead an assault, in the absence of her lord. But think you I have anything to fear from a rival?"

"The only obstacle," said Hardfels, "if it be one, is in that headstrong boy, Staelburg."

"Oh!" exclaimed Würmer, "I have nothing to fear from him, for I know him to be as great a coward as ever ran from danger."

A dark frown came over Hardfels' countenance as he heard this insulting speech; but not wishing to barter words with Würmer, he, producing a whistle, blew a gentle note, adding, that Würmer might know his position from Bertha's own lips. In obedience to the summons the page, whom we have previously mentioned, and who answered to the name of Michael, entered.

"What may be your commands, my lord?" said the lad.

"Go tell the Lady Bertha that I await her presence."

"I obey, my lord," said the page.

Shortly after, the Lady Bertha made her appearance. She could not be more than eighteen years of age, but in form she was tall, and her carriage was both graceful and noble. Her hair was a beautiful auburn, her eyes of a rich blue, her nose a perfect Grecian, her mouth small and beautifully chiselled, with a short upper lip. In fact, she was one of those sylph-like creatures we so often read of, but so seldom see. Her attire, though not sumptuous, was neat and gracefully adjusted, and well calculated to display to the greatest advantage the symmetry of her figure. When she entered, her eyes gave evident proof of recent weeping, and the pensive melancholy which pervaded her countenance touched even the stony heart of Würmer.

"Well, Bertha," said her father, the Baron of Hardfels, after the cold civilities were gone through, "a few words will suffice: I have frequently hinted to you my intentions, and I now require you to accept this young man for your future wedded husband; a ready acquiescence in my wishes will oblige me."

"My dear father!" said the young girl warmly, while her hitherto pale features lit up with a glow of enthusiasm, "I have, up to this time, obeyed your slightest wish, but this one I cannot comply with. Moreover, it was only last night that Father Clement told me, in one of his pious discourses, that the holy sacrament of marriage is not to be trifled with."

"So, ho, Bertha!" said her father in a taunting tone, "you

are going to turn nun, since you are reading your old father a lesson on the subject of matrimony. When I was young, it was the custom for young women to obey their parents; now, it seems, the times are altered, and the daughters take the upper hand. But enough of this; I am accustomed to be obeyed, not only by my servants, but by my children; and what I desire, I am prepared to enforce."

"Then," answered Bertha, "as I have told you again and again, rather would I die than become the wife of one who holds no place in my affections!"

"Did I not tell you of her obduracy?" said Hardfels. "A woman may be persuaded, but she will not be compelled. However, Bertha, if you will not obey my commands, thus lightly pressed, I must have recourse to severer measures."

"Do as you like with me, sir; my fate is in your hands. Doom me to what you will, but nothing shall induce me to unite myself to this gentleman of my own free will!"

"Where the case is so violent," said Würmer, with a grim smile, "strong remedies are required." But seeing that Hardfels did not relish his advice, he continued in a threatening tone: "Baron of Hardfels, I must have your daughter's hand, or"—

"Say no more!" exclaimed Hardfels, in a despairing tone; "her hand shall be yours. And"—addressing his daughter—"so, Bertha, look upon him as your future husband."

"Father!" said the maiden entreatingly, "think upon what you do ere you dispose of my future happiness. What induces you thus to sacrifice your only daughter solely to please this man, whose chief object is to obtain possession of some of your broad estates? But you cannot be a free agent, since you are thus obliged to give up to him that which you once regarded with so affectionate an eye. Oh, father! spare me; give me not to this wicked man!"

During this hurried but eloquent harangue of his daughter, Hardfels had hid his face in his hands, and appeared in great mental agitation. Meanwhile, the Baron of Würmer looked on with a scornful eye, and regarded both father and daughter with an expression of contempt.

Since Bertha had spoken, a profound silence had been maintained on the part of the Baron of Hardfels; for the words of his daughter had made him, for the moment at least, repent his former harshness to her. Still, having pledged himself to an opposite course of conduct, he could not, with any regard to that consistency on which he so greatly prided himself, alter his determination so suddenly, even were he disposed to incur the consequences of the rejected suitor's resentment. Bertha also spoke not, for she was in breathless expectation of her father's answer to her entreaties. Würmer seemed, by his impatient gestures, to be the only one who wished to close the scene; and at length, unable longer to remain silent, he broke out:

"Hardfels, stop this idle parley, and make haste: either give me your daughter, or take the consequences."

Hardfels, who by this time had recovered his wonted composure, thus replied:

"Baron of Würmer, have I not already promised that she shall be yours?"

Here the poor girl's sufferings overcame her, and she fell in a swoon. Carrying his unconscious daughter to a seat, Hardfels immediately summoned an old domestic, who combined the duties of housekeeper and ladies' companion, with whose assistance he conveyed Bertha to her chamber, thus leaving Würmer to his own moody thoughts till Hardfels' return.

The Baron soon came back, and a short but hurried conversation took place between him and Würmer, until the latter, under the plea of another engagement, departed.

CHAPTER II.

The Ruptures.

SCARCELY had Würmer left the apartment ere he was met by the Baron of Hardfels' son. The new comer was a tall, handsome youth, of about twenty years of age. His impetuous ardour and

natural candour contrasted strongly with the cold-blooded policy of his father. Beloved by his equals, almost idolized by his inferiors, and respected by his superiors, no one was more entitled to esteem or confidence than William of Hardfels. Notwithstanding the general kind feelings with which he was regarded, some enemies he had, among the chief of which we may number Würmer.

"Baron of Würmer," said he sternly, his noble countenance assuming a ruddy glow of passion, "you, with your infernal machinations, have been at work here."

"I make all allowance for your youth," said the Baron of Würmer; "but," added he, with ill-suppressed rage,—his intense hatred for the young heir of Hardfels almost getting the mastery over his assumed composure,—"I tell you, my blood will boil at little; beware how you provoke me; retract your words, and I will overlook the insult."

"Never!" said William, haughtily, and laying his hand on the hilt of his sword; while he added, "I hold you in contempt for your baseness."

"I will not disappoint you," said Würmer, seeing the motion of William's hand; "but if any ill should happen to you, your friend Staelburg will never recover from it."

"Do not speak slightly of a better man than yourself," said William, somewhat exasperated by this taunt, "or you may rue the consequences."

They had by this time reached the court-yard, and all conversation was at an end. They measured their arms with a degree of affected composure, utterly at variance with the real sentiments of their hearts. William, although anxious to resent the insult which he considered offered both to his sister and his friend by Würmer's addresses, and, moreover, burning to punish him for the free use he had made of Staelburg's name, preserved a far greater degree of self-possession than his antagonist. The latter, who had now no end to answer by deception, gave full vent to the ferocious dictates of his semi-barbarous heart. Seeing also in William one of the most fearless opponents of his union with Bertha, he was almost unable to repress the savage glee which

the prospect of the destruction of so dangerous an enemy afforded him. With these respective emotions the combatants began.

"Defend yourself!" cried Würmer, putting himself in a posture of offence, while William as quickly placed himself on the defensive, and a rapid interchange of blows followed. However Würmer might have flattered himself that his superior skill would have ensured him the advantage, his usually clear judgment seemed on this occasion entirely to fail him; and he soon found that he was engaged with no ordinary opponent, for, young as William was, his father had spared no expense to render him expert in the use of arms. Thus foiled, and cursing his folly for having provoked an encounter with a superior swordsman to himself, in which he had struck the first blow, Würmer fought at first with a degree of irresolution to which he was in general a stranger. On some occasions he would endeavour to strike the head of his antagonist; again, when there seemed every chance of his accomplishing his purpose, he would devote his skill to the arm, from which he would in turn desist, in the hope of inflicting a mortal wound in the breast. A dexterous plunge from William wounded him slightly in the thigh, which so added to his fury, that what vestige of science he before acted upon was now totally discarded. William was not slow to improve the advantage which the excitement of Würmer gave him, and at length, by a lucky foil, succeeded in striking the latter's weapon from his hand; a somewhat violent blow with the hilt of his sword delivered almost simultaneously on Würmer's breast completed his discomfiture, and laid him prostrate at the victor's feet.

Quarrels like these, at the period of which we write, were generally for life or death, and seldom both combatants came off alive. If, indeed, the generosity of the conqueror spared the life of his vanquished opponent, his existence was in general dearly purchased by a well-nigh mortal wound. Thus it was that William stood over Würmer undecided how to act—whether to slay or spare him. At the same minute an unexpected rencontre relieved him of his doubts. A horseman dashed through the open gateway into the court-yard where the combat had taken place. The stranger, who was no other than the Count of Staelburg,

seeing the relative positions of William and Würmer, and guessing what was passing in his friend's mind, cried out: "Spare him, William! spare him! he is not worthy of your steel."

"Live, wretch! and learn that you owe your life to that Staelburg whom you so lately reviled," said William, thus prompted.

Würmer spoke not, but rose; and with the aid of William, slowly remounted his horse.

"Had you not," said Staelburg, "received some punishment for your despicable conduct, I should myself be willing to try my body against yours. But perhaps, sir, another opportunity may occur."

Würmer, however, was already out of their reach. In his countenance were depicted both shame and rage, and so equally blended were they, that it would be a difficult task to tell which predominated. When he thought that he was sufficiently far away to be in no danger of a pursuit, he exclaimed, at the top of his voice: "Traitors! the day will come when you shall deeply repent this."

William's first remark after Würmer's departure was, "I almost regret having let the scoundrel go; had it not been for your intercession, ere this he had breathed his last."

"Fear not," said his friend, with a smile; "I trust to be able to compile such proofs of his infamous behaviour, in many instances of which, perhaps, you are unaware, as will condemn him and his father, who is equally culpable, almost without a hearing." Here Staelburg stopped for a few moments, at the expiration of which, he thus proceeded: "I have a strong foreboding, however, that the wretch will cause us serious inconvenience before justice claims him."

"When next he crosses swords with me I shall offer him no mercy; so let him look to himself, for I am afraid that we shall in some way or other be the dupes of his artifices," said William of Hardfels.

"I will not," replied Staelburg, "weary you with the details of the many plots he has laid for my life; you may imagine the depth of his malice towards those by whom he considers himself offended."

"The wretch!" exclaimed William, indignantly; "had I known this a little sooner, even your interference would not have saved him."

"Be not so hot, William," said Staelburg, laying his hand affectionately on his friend's shoulder; "a time of reckoning will come, when I trust to pay off all old scores."

"The sooner it comes, the better," said William. "But let us now go to my father, and, perhaps, we may learn of him the purport of Würmer's visit here, which seems to have caused unusual excitement to my sister. And you, after your ride, must have need of some refreshment. Forgive my forgetfulness, for the fellow's insolence has engrossed my whole attention."

Here William, whose recent encounter with Würmer had thrown his attire into some disorder, withdrew, to arrange his dress and perform the minor offices of the toilet; while Staelburg, declining his offer of refreshments, awaited his arrival in the hall, where Hardfels was ensconced previous to Würmer's visit. On entering his chamber, William found his attendant, Karl, apparently anxious to speak to him. The whole appearance of Karl indicated superiority to the generality of his class: he was particularly handsome, and well formed; he had also a most gentle and amiable temper, which secured him the good-will of all who knew him. Although brave, prompt, and energetic, whenever occasion required, his general behaviour was certainly unassuming and obedient. No menial had that noble look, which so truly bespoke gentle blood; and the flash of his dark eye was sufficient to convince even the most obdurate unbeliever in physiognomy of the fact of his having been born for a more distinguished career. Two such handsome young men as the master and page were seldom to be met with.

Karl had been taken into the service of Hardfels at the suggestion of the Count of Würmer. An inexplicable mystery had been attached to his birth, which, it was supposed, could only be solved by the Count; for, although the Baron of Würmer had received some hints from his father on the subject, he knew not the whole particulars.

The Count of Würmer had found that Karl was not a tool

which he could employ for his own purposes; he had, therefore, effectually disposed of the youth by procuring his admission into Hardfel's establishment as a page for his son William. Hardfel's eagerly embraced the arrangement, and Karl was, some few years before the date of our tale, accordingly instated in his new vocation as attendant to William.

Greatly was his amiable disposition esteemed by his young master; and no one strove more to improve the happiness of his servant than did the future heir of Hardfel's. And well was his kindness returned: when ill (for he was formerly of a weak constitution), who was more assiduous in attending to the wants and easing the pain of the patient than Karl? when well, who was more constantly his companion? Besides this, William owed his life to Karl: in taking a bath one day, he was seized with the cramp, and would have sunk, had not the devoted Karl, with great presence of mind, extricated him from the danger.

By way of eliciting the secret, William thus addressed him:

"How is the Lady Bertha now, Karl?"

"She is much better, sir," answered Karl. "Elsbeth hopes that in a few hours she will be quite well."

"Does her mind wander at all?" again asked the young man.

"No, sir; but she talks sadly."

"Said she anything of the Count of Staelburg?"

"No, sir, further than she requested me, in the event of anything serious happening to her, to take a billet to him," said the youth; "but when she saw your father's page, Michael, lurking about, she abandoned the idea."

"I suspect," said William, "that Michael is not quite so honest as he should be; and if I find that he does not alter his proceedings, and understand his position better than he has of late, I shall consider it my duty to acquaint my father with my opinions. During the time that he supplied your place, while you were absent with my father at Vienna, I was anything but satisfied with him."

"Sir," said Karl, respectfully, "might I presume to tell you something that I suspect, and which, if it be true, touches, in good sooth, your honour?"

"Speak on, good youth," said William, kindly.

"Well, sir," said Karl, "since I may speak freely, I will communicate to you the whole of my fears; but as walls have ears, we will, by your permission, withdraw into yonder anteroom, where there will be less chance of our conversation being overheard."

William acted upon the suggestion, and accordingly withdrew.

"I suspect," said Karl, when they were closely closeted, "that Michael, whose conduct has elicited your observation as well as my own, is a spy of the Baron of Würmer."

"On what grounds do you think it, young man?" said William, rather sternly; for, notwithstanding his high opinion of Karl's honour, the natural sense of justice which actuated himself in the same degree as his father, prevented him from lending too ready an ear to accusations. "Be not over hasty in your opinions, for what doth the commandment say? 'Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.'"

"My dear young master," said Karl, the blood rushing fearfully into his face, "be not angry with me. I assure you I am induced to take the present line of conduct not without some compunctions, and entirely from a sense of duty; I meant not to offend you by thus putting you on your guard. But if I have erred, it is from zeal for your honour. You know that life, without you, to me is nothing worth. Have I not risked my life for you, and think you that I should lightly incur the displeasure of the best of masters?"

"Nay, Karl," said William, evidently affected by the words of his attendant; "I was merely checking your fond zeal, lest it should carry you too far; I do not disbelieve you; pray, proceed."

"My reasons are these," said Karl,—a sense of thankfulness for his master's last words altogether effacing any unpleasant effect produced in his mind by his former remarks: "when any members of my lord's family are engaged in private conversation, whether amongst themselves or with others, and especially with the Count of Staelburg, I have frequently found Michael lurking about the door, apparently learning all he can of the discourse."

"My dear Karl, said William, "your suspicions, I think, are not unfounded."

"Thank you, my dear master, for that consoling expression," said Karl, gratefully.

"No thanks, Karl, said William; "you are a well-disposed youth, and never lose sight of your master's honour. If your information prove correct, and your suspicions right, you shall be highly rewarded."

"With equal obligations for your kindness," said Karl, "permit me to say, I seek no reward: to have it in my power to please you is a sufficient recompense to me."

Finding Karl resolute in his refusal to accept any pecuniary reward, he changed the subject, by requesting Karl to see the hounds were well looked too, as it was his intention to join the chase on the morrow. He then as speedily as possible arranged his dress, for foppery was not so much in the ascendant then as now, and hastened to join his friend.

The Count of Staelburg, who is to play a prominent part in our tale, was rather above the average height; his features, though not strictly handsome, were both commanding and pleasing; his complexion was darker than the generality of the German nobility; and his fine open forehead betokened possession of a reflecting mind. With the exception of his refined taste, which was rather in advance of the age, he might be taken as an admirable specimen of that high-spirited and chivalrous aristocracy which at that time was the pride of Germany. His figure was rather too spare to be symmetrical, but promised agility, if not strength. He was rather younger than the Baron of Würmer, and might by many be considered less favoured in person, but in mental accomplishments there could be no comparison between them. Unfortunately for Staelburg, his father and surviving parent, whose disposition had been far too confiding and indolent, had, towards the close of his life, been persuaded by evil advisers to resort to gaming: this, joined to the utter want of economy he observed, had greatly reduced his once princely possessions. On his death, which happened at the siege of St. Quentin, in France, when fighting gallantly under the Duke of Savoy, in conjunction

with the Spaniards, against Henry II., he left his affairs in a most embarrassed condition. By the kind assistance of his father's only brother, who was a civilian of no mean abilities at Leipzig, the young noble was enabled to clear off many of the encumbrances created on the family property, as also to redeem some of those estates which were compelled to be sold in order to meet the engagements of their late owner. Notwithstanding the economy practised by Herman von Staelburg—for such was the name of the young Count's guardian—on the latter coming of age, he was, in fortune, no competitor with the wealthy Würmers. By good management, and acting under the advice of his worthy uncle, Staelburg had continued materially to reduce the remaining liabilities of his father, without in any manner compromising his dignity. His naturally liberal mind was compelled to forego many opportunities of relieving distress, until his circumstances would enable him the better to meet the demands; but notwithstanding his inability to do the good which he so greatly desired, few of his more affluent neighbours (not even excepting the Baron of Hardfels) paid so much attention to the wants of the poor as himself. Both with kind words, and ready pecuniary assistance when possible, Staelburg applied himself to relieve their necessities; and, by his condescending affability, quite won the affections of the warm-hearted peasantry. The Würmers, who exercised their oppressive conduct both towards gentle and simple, found a firm opponent to their designs in the active young Count; and their ungenerous disposition made them hate integrity, which they were unable to respect. Their malicious feelings led to those practices of which Staelburg had complained to William. To his tenantry a liberal lord, to his equals a good neighbour, it is not to be wondered at if his popularity was great. Between William of Hardfels and himself a warm attachment existed; and, as we have before hinted, the beautiful Bertha was by no means an object of indifference to him.

The plain black cloak, and far from gaudy colour of the rest of his raiment, showed that personal adornment was not the chief object of his thoughts.

When William of Hardfels rejoined his friend, both adjourned

to the room appropriated to Bertha. The meeting of the lovers was as warm and affectionate as might be expected, considering the rigidity of etiquette at that period. William then withdrew, and Bertha intimated to Elspeth that her further attendance would not be required. Then followed one of those delightful conferences which so many better writers have depicted, and which many of our readers may have experienced, and all can imagine. Scarcely, however, had Bertha informed her horrified lover of her father's promise to Würmer, when they were interrupted by the Baron of Hardfels.

"Pretty doings, certainly!" said the Baron, hastily, "to faint at one man's suit, and rush madly into the arms of another! And as for you, young sir, I have important business with you: you have pursued your suit to my daughter against my will; but I have not interfered heretofore, in order that I might see how far your audacity would carry you. You dare to rival one of the richest heirs in Germany, the son of the wealthy Count of Würmer!"

"Sir!" said Staelburg, with warmth; "my ancestry is of more noble descent than that of the Baron of Würmer; and had it not been for the trouble into which my poor father fell, I should be as rich, yea, richer than him. Not having received any intimation of your disapprobation of my conduct, I cannot but think your observations uncalled for."

"But," continued the Baron of Hardfels, unheeding the interruption, "setting aside wealth and other considerations, which may influence other men, but which do not hold their power over me, I command you, Count of Staelburg, for reasons it is not necessary to reveal, to think no more of my daughter. For you, Bertha, if I find you again consorting with this young man, you will incur my serious displeasure. If I am rightly informed, you have had private interviews with your romantic lover." This he added with an expression of ill-concealed contempt.

"Sir, your information is false, and has only been used for the purpose of prejudicing you against me. All interviews in your absence between your daughter and myself have taken place in your mansion with the knowledge of your son—and, it appears, of

others also," answered Staelburg, with generous wrath, the blood rushing to his temples at the supposition of such a thing as the Baron suggested.

"However that may be," said the Baron, calmly, yet authoritatively, "you will not again present yourself here as a lover; and for my greater satisfaction, I now, as Bertha's father, request you to subscribe your name to this document,"—handing him a paper,—“of which the requirements are, that you resign all claim to the hand of my daughter, and that you will not again enter my residence with any intentions towards her. My doors shall ever be open to you as a friend,—which, you must acknowledge, I have always been to you,—but in no other capacity. One thing more, and I have done: promise me that you will appreciate the value of the Baron of Würmer both as a husband and a man in the sight of my daughter. If you do so, and in such a manner as to meet my approbation, I will not omit anything to help you to the acquirement of those of your estates of which your father's creditors are now in possession.”

Staelburg had waited patiently till the Baron had finished, and then replied with great calmness:

“Baron of Hardfels, do you take me for such as the Count of Würmer, or his sordid son, who would almost barter their souls for any acquisition by which they might increase their wealth and extend their influence? No, sir; I would rather forfeit all my present possessions, and those of my father, which by my economy are daily reverting to me, than part in so dishonourable a manner with that one thing which I hold to be dearest on earth. Moreover, Baron of Hardfels, I know you to be a man of your word, and what you undertake to do you leave not undone. Therefore, before you pass your irrevocable resolutions, think well of them, and let not your judgment be biassed by any unfavourable conclusions. Consider what misery you will occasion on the one hand, and what bliss you will create on the other.” This the young Count of Staelburg said, not with anything like abject supplication, but with a degree of earnestness that was not habitual to him. His natural demeanour was far too haughty to allow him to ask as a favour what he considered as a right.

"Young man," said Hardfels, in the same tone of voice, "you have spoken well; but none of your high-flown speeches will avail with me. I have said that which you must obey."

"But——," added the young Count.

"Silence, sir!" said the Baron, interrupting him immediately. "I know it is not an easy task for a lover to forsake his mistress when his love is sincere! but I fear the love you bear to my daughter is not of that character."

"How, sir!" said the Count, infuriated beyond all bounds. "Do you mean to say that I love not your daughter?"

"Be calm," said the Baron, sternly. "It is but too probable that other considerations, besides true love, actuate you."

"Sir!" said Staelburg, enraged if possible more than ever, "if these words had been uttered by any other man,—I mean by any one in full possession of youth and strength,—they should be recalled, or the fair lands of Staelburg again should lose their lord."

"My commands have been communicated to you," continued the Baron of Hardfels, evidently not paying much attention to the last speech of Staelburg; "and if they are not obeyed, I must needs enforce them by a higher power than my own. You know what influence I possess over the Margrave; beware that I do not exercise that influence to your hurt, and bring down the effects of it on your head! Some five or six years of banishment often cools hot blood like yours," added the Baron, smiling grimly.

"Sir, my blood is hot at times, but at present it is as cool, even cooler, than your own," said Staelburg, who had by this time become more composed.

"Well, let us barter no more words," said Hardfels. "Let me advise you to give up your foolish suit to my daughter, without any more trouble. I should not like to proceed to harsh measures with you. What is your determination?"

"My determination, sir, depends upon your daughter; and I now appeal to her. If the Baron of Würmer is more favoured than myself, nothing remains for me but to yield the field to him. If, indeed, my ardent attachment meets with any return, do not imagine I shall deal so lightly with her affections."

For some time a deep silence reigned ; but the Baron, who was not in the habit of being kept long in suspense by his children, remarked, in an imperious manner :

"Since it appears that this hair-brained young man will not suffer my remonstrances to have any weight with him, I look to you, Bertha, to decide the point. If not for your own sake, at least for his, let your answer be in accordance with my wishes?"

Thus appealed to, Bertha reluctantly answered : "Whatever your wishes may be, sir, since you expect me to speak the truth, you shall not be disappointed. I cannot say that the Baron of Würmer holds any place in my breast ; neither should I feel disposed to give the Count of Staelburg any proof of inconstancy. I have no objection to the breaking off of our engagement, if either his happiness or interest is promoted by such a course ; but unless I hear from him that such is his wish, I cannot take the initiative." Here she found relief in a violent fit of weeping.

"Then, sir!" said Staelburg, a glow of triumph supervading his countenance, "I will not prove myself unworthy of your beauteous daughter's confidence. My choice is made. Never will I resign my suit in favour of Würmer, whatever may be the consequences!"

"Time will show," rejoined Hardfels, menacingly.

"Never!" retorted the impassioned lover.

"I give you two days to think on what I have said ; and if your sentiments on the subject remain unchanged, prepare yourself for the full extent of my vengeance." So saying, the Baron of Hardfels left the room.

A brief pause followed his departure, which was broken by Staelburg, who asked of the weeping Bertha : "Have I the happiness of knowing that your feelings towards me are in all respects the same as before?"

"Yes," she faintly answered, in a voice choked by sobs. "I am ever yours ! But go, my Augustus, and think upon what you have heard."

After an affectionate adieu, the lovers departed : Bertha for her chamber, and Staelburg for the hall.

CHAPTER III.

The Spy.

IN addition to the persons taking part in the foregoing conversation, there was one other, who paid great attention to it. Michael, the aforesaid page, had slipped into the room, and had hidden himself behind one of the massive screens. William and Karl were not far wrong in their conjectures that Michael was a paid spy of the Würmers. By what means they first gained him over to their interests, it is not our good fortune to know. He was certainly "worthy of his hire," by the zeal he displayed in their service. He seldom failed to obtain accurate information for his employers; but, in the absence of that, he was not above dealing in fiction. Thinking him too artless to take any notice of his, or his family's, proceedings, even the wary Baron of Hardfels did not suspect him of any deceitful or treacherous dealings. It has been frequently observed, that deceivers of all kinds are not included in the rule of "honour among thieves," since it is their usual practice to exercise their abilities to the detriment of their fellow-creatures, that it may seem impossible for them to commit the offences which they affect to hold in such utter abhorrence in others. So it was with Michael: though he had only been two years in the Hardfels' family, during that time more than one of his fellow-servants owed his disgrace to him. Michael was an admirable servant, steady, and well versed in all the duties which were requisite for a page, or, if occasion required, a valet. In truth, he often officiated in this latter capacity to the old Baron. Whether it was from a desire to avert suspicion, or to gratify his malice, we know not; but it was seldom he used his talents for the benefit of William.

In the situation where he ensconced himself, he let not a word escape him. At the end of the conversation, he crept out. But here all his cunning availed him nothing; for Karl, who chanced to be near the spot, and suspecting his designs, charged him with having played the spy.

Michael was too well-versed in the art of deception to suffer himself to be detected without some attempt to justify his conduct; he therefore replied, in answer to the charge, with an assumption of injured innocence: "You know, Master Karl, that it is easier to accuse a person than to prove that accusation."

"Michael," said Karl, regarding him steadily, "you know that it is not the first time I have caught you spying; and I now plainly tell you, if you do not leave off this disgraceful course, Master William shall know of it, and your dismissal will soon follow."

"Master William is nothing to me," returned the other.

"Whether he be or not, from him the Baron will know it," replied Karl.

"But my lord has too good an opinion of me to condemn me on mere suspicion."

"It is not mere suspicion, you know," replied Karl; "for where have you now come from? and, pray, for what purpose did you secrete yourself?"

"Is that business of yours, Karl? Am I responsible to you—a page—for my actions?" said Michael, in a surly tone. "Pray, who set you to be my inquisitor—to know where I come from, or go to? No, Master Karl, you'll get nothing from me."

"Michael," said Karl, "you know that I, although younger than you, am stronger; and if you do not give a decided answer to my question, I shall by force make you."

"Why am I to answer you?—because you boast yourself to be stronger? Ha! ha!" added he, with a laugh.

"You are aware that no good purposes led to your playing the spy. I am now resolved to know the real facts of the case, and for whom it is you act so disgraceful a part; so I advise you to answer me with a good grace, or you will rue the consequences of a refusal."

"I have nothing to reveal, nor should I be disposed to tell aught at your bidding," said Michael. "I should like to try your boasted strength, which I have not yet fairly done, and am not sure you would come off the victor."

"Well, for the trial," returned the other.

Each threw off the loose overcoat generally worn by pages,

to preserve their better underclothes, in order to give them more freedom of action. As neither had any offensive or defensive weapons except those with which nature had furnished them, no great harm could well be apprehended.

The place was singularly adapted for their operations. It was a large sort of landing, of about twelve feet square, covered with rushes thickly strewn, so that a fall could not hurt them in any dangerous degree. Around could be seen the massive doors of many of the rooms which opened into the aforesaid landing. The grand staircase protruded at one end, and continued its winding course over the heads of the combatants. When all the necessary preliminaries were settled, they began their wrestling match, for it was not much better, and unworthy of the more polite appellation of duel.

Michael rushed forwards, as if to annihilate his opponent at the first blow, and thus win the victory, which he knew would otherwise terminate in Karl's favour; but the latter, seeing his intention, strove, not without some success, to defeat it. In the rush made by Michael, Karl was scarcely quick enough: although he escaped the larger blow, he fell in with one of Michael's arms, which swung about like great clubs. This he received on his chest, which staggered him, but did him no harm. It was now his turn to act on the offensive. He instantly sprang forward on his enemy, and grappled him closely. Here it was that the thick-set form of Michael was again decidedly against him, while the light figure of Karl was well adapted for this close fight. They continued in this manner for some time, till Michael, by some mismanagement on the part of Karl, slipped from him and prepared for another spring. But he was defeated by his active opponent, who again closed with him, and after a short struggle brought him to the ground.

The prostrate Michael, seeing all further resistance was vain, sullenly submitted. Karl then repeated his question, with the additional threats, not only of his own personal vengeance, but of the fierce wrath of his superiors; and after much prevarication on the part of Michael, received the following answer:

"Well, Karl, since you have obtained the advantage, I must

comply with your unreasonable requests; but you would never have extracted the truth by any other means than force. I slipped into the room unobserved by any one, and overheard the whole conversation from beginning to end. With regard to the second part of your question, if you will take no other answer, I cannot deny that I am bought by the Baron of Würmer; and, indeed, the old man bruited to me something about it. The Baron gave me five crowns, and said, if I did well, he would reward me further."

"Michael," said Karl, seriously, "I am sorry for you; but I must tell my young master the substance of your confession, which will, without doubt, lead to your dismissal."

"Well, so be it. Let me go now, Karl. I have answered all your questions; you cannot want anything more with me," said the other, sulkily.

Karl suffered his discomfited fellow-servant to rise; after which Michael retired to the servants' hall, where he experienced but little sympathy.

William of Hardfels, who had accompanied his friend to the gateway, had by this time returned, and was met by Karl, who thus addressed him: "Ay, Master William, the plot is out,—Michael has confessed that he is the spy of the Würmer's."

"You are right, then, Karl," said William, grasping his page's hand with fervor. "Forgive me for harbouring a single suspicion of you, but I could not condemn any one on mere surmise only, without proofs."

"You give me new life. I knew you intended not the wound that you inflicted," said Karl, earnestly.

"Well, Karl," said William, "I want to know the particulars of your discovery. I have got a little spare time before dinner, which I may not have after."

"The facts," said Karl, "are these: I was not aware that my Lady Bertha was sufficiently recovered to leave her bed-chamber; and as I was about to prepare the green room for her reception, I perceived Michael emerge from behind a screen, whereupon I instantly accused him with having acted the spy."

"But, of course, he did not admit the truth so readily?" said William.

"When I charged him, he stoutly denied it. I still persisted in my accusation, and told him that if he did not speak the truth, I should make him. But he was equally obstinate, and so we had a trial of our strength, till at last I got him down, and compelled him to relate the facts, namely, that he had overheard everything, and that he was a paid spy of the Würmers."

"Did he seem crestfallen, Karl?" asked William.

"Yes, sir," answered the youth; "but he appeared more sullen than humiliated."

"The course I must now pursue is, to report these facts to my father."

During the evening, William performed his promise, and communicated to his father what he had heard. Great was the fury of the Baron of Hardfels on ascertaining the manner in which Würmer conducted his suit; and it is not improbable that the contrast between the rival claimants of his daughter's hand made him deeply regret the rejection of the more honourable.

The next day, Michael made one of the household of the Count of Würmer, who, however annoyed at the disclosure he had made, could not but consider him possessed of too much ability to be employed only in reporting conversations. The Count, therefore, forbore to reproach Michael with his failure, thinking that abundant opportunities might occur of expiating his offence by fidelity and devotion to his interests, in which, as the sequel will show, he was not deficient.

CHAPTER IV.

Würmer and his Coadjutor.

THE reader may imagine, from the last words of Würmer, and the general impression we have endeavoured to give of his character, that he was not particularly nice in the choice of the means to accomplish his purposes. His first idea, therefore, on leaving the scene of his late misfortune, was to form a scheme of ven-

geance against those who had discomfited him. Sore as was the ill-will which he bore to the young heir of Hardfels, his enmity to the Count of Staelburg was of a prior date, and was certainly of no less intensity. In the former he saw a rash, hot-headed youth, whose skill lay only in the use of weapons, and who, from his inexperience, would fall an easy prey to the dexterous plottings of so able a tactician as himself. Between Staelburg and Würmer there had never been much loss of love; and, from the clearness of intellect, as well as the superior general abilities of the young Count, Würmer saw in him a dangerous antagonist: besides this, they were rivals, which, to so unforgiving a disposition as Würmer's, was a sufficient justification for anything. The modern proverb pronounces all stratagems fair in love, war, and electioneering; and although unacquainted with the last, Würmer acted zealously up to the precept in the other cases. Upon these considerations, the worthy noble thought it prudent to wreak his vengeance on his more formidable foe in the first instance, and to defer the execution of his designs upon William of Hardfels until a more convenient opportunity. With energy becoming a far better object, he lost no time in commencing with a sworn ally of his, by name Ruffo, who, after having served with some little honour in the numerous wars of the period, had turned his sword, not into a pruning-hook, but into an assassin's poniard, and gained his living by plundering and murdering any travellers who might come under his tender mercies, in conjunction with a numerous band of kindred spirits who owned his authority. Dreading the consequences of his crimes, Ruffo seldom remained long in one locality. But such was the intimate acquaintance existing between the titled and the untitled villain, that one was seldom ignorant of the other's movements for any great space of time. On the present occasion, Ruffo had taken up his quarters in a ruined chateau, which had probably lost its owner by his fraud, and which, from being situate in such delightful contiguity to his frequent haunts, no one cared to inhabit. On Würmer's approach, one of the amiable fraternity emerged from a hidden retreat, and proceeded in sullen silence to escort him to the then abode of Ruffo. A few dogs of noble appearance, used for the purpose of securing deer,

when the savage disposition of the robber took a comparatively peaceful turn, set up a fierce bay at his appearance; but on a gesture from the attendant, shrunk frightened away. A brief parley took place between the man we have mentioned, and a companion within; after which, the bolts with which the entrance of the habitation was fortified, were removed, and Würmer was soon left alone with his coadjutor. Ruffo was short in stature, somewhat round in the shoulders, and possessed an eye of piercing brilliancy, in which a thirst for blood and plunder revelled in uncontrolled ferocity. His hair was of a curling black, and, to do justice to Germany, we must confess our suspicions, that she could not claim the honour of being the mother-country of the determined scoundrel in question, whose whole appearance bore token of belonging to that land of beautiful women, and dissipated men—Italy. Such was Ruffo, as he left his employment of making an inventory of the stock in trade of a deceased merchant,—whose death arose under circumstances which would justify a jury, on a coroner's inquest, in returning a verdict of "wilful murder against some person or persons unknown,"—to greet his visitor. It will not excite much wonder if we proceed to inform the reader, that but little real good-will was manifested between the two accomplices in crime. Suspicion is one of the necessary consequences of vice; and although Würmer was compelled to disclose more of the workings of his mind to Ruffo than to any other, all disclosures were made with much distrust, which Ruffo, who possessed a fair share of penetration, was not slow to perceive. The real state of the connexion between the two consisted in that all-pervading bond, mutual interest: one acted as an admirable tool to the other, in all matters requiring secrecy, and in which it would be beneath what little dignity Würmer possessed to appear to be concerned; while, on the other hand, Würmer's influence, and the immense accession of business created by his good offices, were, so to speak, of great advantage to the calculating ruffian. Having thus enlightened the uninitiated reader into the nature of the intercourse existing between these useful members of society, we will, as faithful historians, inform him of the conversation which took place between them.

Finding his patron the reverse of communicative, Ruffo, who grudged every minute spared from the pleasing task of scheduling his booty, and apportioning it between the captors (of course the lion's share being reserved to himself), in a low voice, ventured to demand to what he was indebted for the honour of a visit from the Baron of Würmer? Würmer had trusted that his "fidus Achates" would have surmised the subject of his thoughts, and thus obviated the painful, and indeed dangerous, necessity of expressing them; but Ruffo, who was by no means deficient in this saving knowledge, feigned utter ignorance of his wishes. Seeing that his wily accomplice was indisposed to begin on so delicate a subject, "screwing his courage to the sticking-place," Würmer commenced:

"On many previous occasions, when in the direst straits, I have been rescued from jeopardy, chiefly by your able assistance: there are circumstances which render it prudent for me once more to have recourse to you. I will not deny that the services I require from you are of an arduous nature; but so fertile a mind as yours seldom fails of success. May I count upon your help?"

"I peril my life for no man without ample recompense!" said Ruffo, doggedly. "Answer me two points (since I am not so blind as to expose myself to danger for the exclusive gratification of others without fully understanding the extent of the risk and of the reward),—firstly, what I am to perform? secondly, what I am to expect?"

Würmer bit his lip, in silent mortification at the ill success of this appeal to the bandit's weak point; but added, in a tone of surprise:

"I had hoped, Ruffo, that your love of enterprise would have predominated over every such secondary consideration; and it is not without regret that I observe reward and self-interest possess more of your thoughts than either honour or friendship."

"You are a bigger fool than I imagined you to be," said Ruffo, curtly, "if you think that my friendship for you would prompt me to risk my life, or anything else, on your behalf, without consideration. Friends we are now, because you have need

of my assistance; when my exertions have made you secure, how long will your friendship continue? Methinks, in the future, I see the Baron of Würmer claiming of the Margrave of Baden a rich reward, for the destruction of the proscribed outlaw.—But to the point,—you want certain obnoxious individuals put out of the way. Act with less reserve; give me but their names and your price; and rest assured that all shall be done to your satisfaction!”

“For this I have your word; but, to lose no time, the Count of Staelburg has become an awkward opponent of my plans. As one or the other of us must be put out of the way, for the convenience of the survivor, I would prefer doing that office by him to becoming his victim. My offer is”—here he paused, as if engaged in calculation,—“no less a sum than five hundred crowns, which I engage, on my word of honour, to pay, on good proof that you have accomplished your task. There are others on whom I may, at no very distant period, require you to try your skill; but of this more hereafter. Your neighbour, Albert, for instance, seems to be in too close a connexion with the young Staelburg to be permitted much longer to cross my path. As an additional stimulation to you to act with energy, I will give the sum of one hundred crowns for his head!”

A sarcastic chuckle on the part of Ruffo testified his opinion of this spirited offer; after which, he replied, with an air of indifference:

“You were right in saying that these matters are of an arduous nature. On no other terms than these am I your man:—The sum of seven hundred crowns shall be paid me on the death of Staelburg; and for no less reward than two hundred crowns will I effect the death of Albert. Moreover, as between us I have no great opinion of your honour, most worthy sir, I insist on having a written undertaking from you, to pay these moneys in the way you mention. Without these terms, you must seek for assistance elsewhere. A small writing, such as I require, would convince you, on my applying for the stipulated recompense, that my claims were just; and, moreover, would give me hold on you corresponding to the fearful extent to which I am in your power,—that is what I call fair play.”

"How?" said Würmer, by no means approving of the plan suggested; "are we not already even? What evidence have I against you, which you have not against me? You have my word of honour for payment of the money. What else do you want?"

"Probably, my good patron," said the bandit, with a sneer, "you have never given much consideration to the vast difference existing between the son of a Count of the empire and an outlawed robber. Laws are too much like spiders' webs, wherein small flies are taken, while large ones escape. It would be easy for you to betray me; and without the written promise I speak of, I have not the remotest chance of obtaining a hearing from the Emperor, the Margrave, or any one else. I await your final answer, as my good comrades are expecting the division of the spoil."

After some ineffectual remonstrances against the exorbitance of the price, and the inconvenience attending the written guarantee, Würmer drew up a document, more to the satisfaction of Ruffo than himself. As he handed it over to the worthy, he said:

"Mind, Ruffo, the understanding between us is, that this is to be delivered to no one but your lieutenant; in fact, it would be better if this little matter remained a secret between us. When I left Hardfels, the young Count was just entering. It is very likely, that if you were to station some of your men by the side of the road, your purpose may be accomplished without delay, and without loss of life to your followers. No time should be lost, though, as he will soon betake himself homewards."

"Thank you for the hint," answered Ruffo: "I will forthwith make arrangements for some of my best men being in ambush. I trust soon to be in possession of your seven hundred crowns."

"The sooner the better," said Würmer, as, having with some difficulty, and many concessions, accomplished his purpose, he quitted the presence of the freebooter.

No sooner had the door closed upon him, and he was fairly mounted on the steed, which his former acquaintance had brought him, than he indulged in a torrent of imprecations on the mer-

cenary Ruffo, who had succeeded in inveigling him into signing so important a document as the one we have mentioned. The slight wound which William inflicted, and which he had carefully concealed from Ruffo, lest it should impress the latter with a disparaging idea of his skill at arms, now caused him much pain; and although his plans for revenge were well matured, and in every way likely to meet with success, we doubt if his mind was a whit easier than his body. "Devils rush in where angels fear to tread;" and though Würmer respected no tie of honour, and paid but little heed to the dictates of conscience (if, indeed, he had not already quenched the flame), he was by no means a stranger to that fear and uneasiness which so frequently haunt the guilty breast. We shall, however, leave the description of the means employed by Ruffo to the next chapter.

CHAPTER V.

The Attack and Rescue.

AFTER bidding farewell to William of Hardfels, at the grand entrance, Staelburg mounted his horse, and rode off at an easy pace.

The distance between his residence and that of Hardfels was about six miles, which, to so good a steed as Staelburg bestrode, was but the work of half an hour; for the young Count, although frugal, possessed such a horse as few could boast. Most persons indulge their taste in some point or other; and Staelburg, who was a connoisseur in horseflesh, took every precaution to secure a well-bred animal.

The road, if such the rough tract he was traversing might be called, lay through the wildest scenery. The lofty fir-trees rustled with the cold evening wind, and the rising moon cast its mild and softening beams over the whole face of nature. The way, though romantic, and even pleasant, struck terror into the superstitious minds of the peasantry. As is customary in rural districts, there were certain trees where lovers had hanged themselves in despair.

There were spots where, as tradition asserted, the ruffians who infested the thickly wooded districts had committed some atrocity of uncommon magnitude and daring, while the spirits of those who had come to an end, either by their own hand or by the assistance of others, were, of course, seen by numerous persons to pay their nocturnal visits to the spots where their mortal career had terminated.

At some distance, the rocks of Heidelberg frowned in majestic grandeur, and formed a fitting accompaniment to the dense forests which occupied the majority of the landscape. From the lax administration of the laws at the period, these last formed a complete land of Goshen for marauders of all kinds; and scarcely a night or day passed without some outrage being committed. The monarchs who presided over these lawless communities, were our acquaintance Ruffo, on the one part; and Albert, of whom some previous mention has been made, and who enjoyed the more extensive sway, on the other. Albert, though obtaining an ample livelihood by means which the fastidiousness of the present day would not scruple to call dishonest, was possessed of a more chivalrous regard for honour than the majority of these knights of the woodlands, and was, in many particulars, a useful member of society. Much good to the poor, and no little embarrassment to the rich, did he occasion; for, notwithstanding these little peccadilloes, there was a degree of frankness and *bon-homme* about him, which rendered him an object of more love than dread.

Thinking it not unlikely that some of Ruffo's gang might levy their contributions upon him, Staelburg, while cantering along, examined his petronels, which he always carried in his holsters, and loosened his sword in his scabbard, in order to be in a position to repel force by force.

A large raven, croaking most ominously, flew from an old lightning-struck tree, and winged its way into the deeper recesses of the forest.

"Ha!" he soliloquised, "I suppose, when I get home, I shall, as usual, be questioned by the old Kaisa, as to whether I saw a ghost. She will surely tell me that this raven is the spirit of some murdered man. But her reasoning is all in vain, for I have

no more faith in ghosts than ever." Four miles of the six had now been passed, and already the main turret of Staelburg Castle could be discerned in the moonlight. In his then state of mind, the sight of the abode of his ancestors could not fail to conjure to his remembrance scenes long forgotten; and a tear fell from his eye as he thought of his mother, and all the good lessons she had inculcated upon his young mind. Then the young Count's memory reverted to more painful scenes: he beheld himself standing before the death-bed of his revered parent; he heard her last benediction. His father's look of agonised despair presented itself to his view, when he returned from the scene of his extravagance the dupe of artful deceivers. Staelburg, however, was of too hopeful a disposition to dwell long on the gloomy side of the subject; and his vivid fancy pictured future happiness with Bertha for his bride, and all the estates of his ancestors once more returned to him their rightful possessor. But the maddening thought of Hardfels' violent opposition to his suit dispelled these happy visions, and left him to the reflection that in another day or two he would be a banished man, and those estates, which by dint of economy he had acquired, would probably add to the riches of his enemies.

These meditations occupied the time during which nearly another mile had been passed. Suddenly, a rustling in the bushes which lined the road attracted his attention. Thinking all was not right, he instantly put himself in a position of defence. The gleam of steel the next moment confirmed his opinions; but ere he had time to urge his horse to a quicker pace, three men rushed from the left side of the road, a little in advance of him, while two more were seen emerging from a bush in his rear. One of the three endeavoured to seize his bridle-rein, but Staelburg, rising in his stirrup, struck the over-rash assailant prostrate to the earth with his sword. The other two, who were truly Ruffo's picked men, attacked him simultaneously, and succeeded in arresting his progress; while the young man defended himself with great vigour and resolution. Before, however, he could disengage himself from them, the men in the rear had reached the scene of strife. Finding it a work of some difficulty to loosen their hold of his

rein, our hero spurred his horse forwards, with the hope of freeing himself of them. The noble animal seemed conscious of his master's intentions, and sprang forward to release him from his assailants. One of the ruffians, seeing his intentions, with a violent blow, hamstrung the horse. Perceiving the beast sink under him, Staelburg extricated his feet from the stirrups, and sprang nimbly to the ground. Planting his left foot on the body of his bleeding steed, he boldly faced his adversaries. Menacing them with his good sword in his right hand, with his left he sought a petronel in his holsters, and levelling it at the foremost bravo, fired. The ball, by a change in the position of its intended mark, whistled past his shoulder, and buried itself deeply in the trunk of a neighbouring oak. The stillness of the night and the proximity of the trees served to increase the sound tenfold. Alarmed, as guilty consciences generally are by trifles, the ruffians paused for a moment, to recommence their operations. In the next onslaught, they met with more success: so impetuous was the attack, that in resisting it, Staelburg's foot slipped, and he fell with a degree of force which knocked his weapon from his hand. With considerable presence of mind, however, Staelburg succeeded in drawing the remaining petronel before the robbers had time to improve their advantage. One, in his eager haste to impale his enemy, had overshot his mark, and the thrust, which with care might have inflicted a fatal wound, produced no worse effect than a graze of the sword-arm. Sir Walter Scott, in his admirable romance of "Waverley," makes an able remark, that, in the use of small arms, although the parties threatened are sure that but one can pay the penalty of temerity, yet each is gifted by bountiful nature with too great a love of self-preservation to incur the risk of being that one; and thus one man, so armed, may keep at bay a countless number of ill-equipped foes. Such was the case with Ruffo's banditti: each waited for his companion to set the example; and as neither felt a sufficient regard for his comrade to become the recipient of the bullet, to earn seven hundred crowns or some proportion thereof for the survivors, their movements were of a very cautious nature. The pause so produced gave time for the arrival of unexpected assistance to the young Count.

The new comer handled a weighty broadsword with the air of a master workman, and soon diminished the number of assailants by one luckless wight, who, two minutes sooner, might by his death have secured the destruction of our hero. "*Telle est la vie,*" and the selfishness of human nature. Then applying a silver whistle to his lips, he blew a few shrill notes. Scarcely had a minute elapsed ere the bushes again rustled, and two men habited in woodland garb arrived to take part in the fray. Seeing this unexpected reinforcement, the ruffians immediately fled. The foresters prepared to follow, but were prevented by the first stranger.

"No, no; let them go, my men; we have done enough for one night; perhaps their flight may be only feigned, to lure you to destruction; let us remove this"—motioning to the corpse of the man he had slain—"out of the way, as well as that horse,—a noble animal, in good sooth,"—pointing to the nearly dead steed of Staelburg. "What a waste of horseflesh! These followers of Ruffo know not the merits of a good horse."

"I hope, my lord," continued he, turning to the young Count, "that you are unhurt. The rascals made a vigorous attack upon you, and, I fear, would have made quick work of you, had not I heard the report of your petronel. I thought there was something amiss, and so I hastened to give my assistance. It was fortunate the sound came to my ears,—was it not?"

"It was!—it was!" exclaimed the Count, grasping the hand of his deliverer; "and I will not prove ungrateful to you for your ready aid. Had it not been for you, Albert, I should in all probability be a corpse. You were before my friend; you are now, if possible, bound to me by a yet more sacred tie. What means have I of requiting your kindness?"

"Oh, Count!" replied the daring outlaw, "say nothing of that. Had it been an object of the utmost indifference to me, my love for fighting would have prompted me to do the same. I am, however, particularly happy to be of any service to the Count of Staelburg. It is a strange thing if I cannot do some little good occasionally, to atone for the wrongs I am too often in the habit of committing."

"Anything that is in my power to perform on your behalf, I will gladly do; but I fear that unless I speedily offer my assistance, you will never call for it,—you are far too disinterested."

"That is a crime seldom laid to my charge. Few accuse me of neglecting my own interests. Nevertheless, if I am in want of anything which it is beyond my own power to obtain, I shall not fail to wait on you," said the brigand, with a smile. "You know that, generally, the exertions of my followers supply me with all my necessities; so that I am in a fair state of contentment."

"Yours is a dangerous life, Albert; I am sorry you do not embrace some other occupation."

"None else would suit me. All other crafts are too limited and confined for my roving habits."

"What think you of a soldier's life?" said Staelburg. "There is plenty of change, and an unusual degree of liberty."

"You are right, my lord—that is the only alternative; but mischances often happen in war, such as being cooped up in a fort for months, like a cat. I fear I should miss the greenwood shade, and the fat venison."

"But you might not be so long, if even such a mischance befell you; for ——"

"I should be taken prisoner, and fare still worse," interposed Albert.

"No; I was about to say *rescued*," replied Staelburg.

"I understand you," said the brigand chief. "But there is a stronger reason why a soldier's life would not be in accordance with my tastes. I could not brook any authority—my proud spirit would revolt. No; I would submit to no man's will, unless it also pleased my own to do so."

"But in a few years you may be rewarded for your former submission, by being appointed to a post which only yields to the commander-in-chief in authority; and perhaps fortune may favour you so much that you may obtain even that high post. Brave men are not so numerous in Germany that many are obliged to go without reward for their active services. What say you to the command of a body of rangers in France, for instance, if you

wished for change of scene? The commotions in that country are quite sufficient to keep your sword in employment."

"No," said Albert. "My sword, if drawn at all in regular warfare, shall be dedicated to the service of my own country. Let the people of France please themselves; the Margrave of Baden is my immediate superior."

"I agree with you, then. I wish not to fight in any other cause than that of the Margrave, since he is my lawful sovereign; and I have, as yet, no reason to deplore it, although circumstances may induce me to alter my opinion ere long," said Staelburg.

"How?" asked Albert, in an anxious tone. "Is anything amiss?—you have not offended the Margrave?"

"Not him, exactly; but one of his greatest supporters;—you know who I mean?"

"I can guess," said Albert: "the Baron of Hardfels."

"You have it," said the Count. "He and the Würmers, father and son, are the only persons who, I think, would wish me evil. What say you, Albert?"

"You are right, Count," said the brigand. "Few wish you ill. And, for my part, I think the old Baron is not so bitter as you suppose him to be."

"Perhaps not," replied Staelburg.

"Time was," said Albert, "when no better neighbour could be found in this part of the country than the Baron of Hardfels; but since such an intimacy has existed between himself and the Würmers, a great change has come over him. He is certainly not the same man. He looks older than he did. My own opinion is that, in secret, the old Baron wishes well to your suit; but he does not like to offend Würmer, by giving his daughter to any other than his son. But we have been conversing so long, that you have forgotten to answer my question; so I must ask you again, whether you came off scatheless in your encounter with those rascally ruffians?"

"I have fared remarkably well," said Staelburg. "The only wound I received, if such indeed it may be called, is a slight scratch from one of their swords; but it is not sufficient to cause

much inconvenience ; it may be as well, however, to have it inspected on my arrival home."

"I am sorry I cannot give you such assistance. Our trade is rather to give than to cure. We have few mediciners in these parts, although it is affirmed that Ruffo, my excellent neighbour, has one in his employ."

"Thank you," said Staelburg ; "but I must be homewards—it is too late to tarry further?"

"I shall walk home with you," said Albert, "in case you incur fresh risks. It might fare badly with you, with your wounded arm."

"No fear of anything more of that sort from these wild men of the woods," replied Staelburg, with a smile. "I am fully prepared for my defence. And, moreover, I shall be taking up some of your precious time."

"Oh ! it will occupy but a few minutes to go with you and return," said the brigand : "it is scarcely a mile to the castle. Besides, you are now no match for me ; therefore you must perforce obey," he continued, with a laugh.

"Well, so be it," said the young man. "I shall be glad of your company. It is a solitary walk to one who has no other company than his own gloomy thoughts. I have some wine of no despicable quality to offer you, if you will partake of it."

The two then set forward, and talked with such good-will, that they approached their destination almost without their knowledge. The castle of Staelburg was fairly in sight, and a magnificent specimen of an ancient castle it was. It had been erected in the twelfth century, by the first Count of Staelburg, when the revenues of the family were more ample than at present ; and was of larger dimensions, as well as of a more tasteful design, than the castle of Hardfels. This being the family mansion, was the only one occupied by Staelburg, who greatly revered those gone by. Of late years the young Count had foresworn camps and courts, which formerly occupied some little of his attention, and devoted more care to the improvement of his reduced patrimony in general, and to the embellishment of the mansion in particular.

There was a slight pause in the conversation when this magnificent view of the castle first broke the monotony of the scenery. The brigand gazed attentively on it, and then, turning to his companion, said :

“ If I had such a castle as that, I would leave off this trade of mine. It is a noble structure, is it not ? ”

“ It is—it is,” murmured the young man,

Seeing that it would not be delicate to pursue the conversation further on this point, since any additional allusion to the subject might vex the feelings of his companion, Albert turned it into another channel,

“ If ever another affair like this night’s adventure happens to you, blow three shrill notes on this, and I can guarantee the assistance of any of my band who may chance to be within hearing.”

Whilst saying this, he had taken the before-mentioned whistle from his neck, and slipped it over that of the young Count. Staelburg turned round to thank him, but his late deliverer was gone, and he was left standing alone a short distance from his own gates. He had soon crossed the drawbridge over the bright river, which served as a moat, and walked up the terrace which surrounded the castle to the private entrance. Arrived at the latter, he was instantly admitted by an attendant in a neat and handsome, but not sumptuous, livery.

“ Tell Kaisa I await her in the oak chamber,” said Staelburg to the attendant.

The man bowed and retired.

Staelburg then wended his way through one of the tortuous passages which led from the grand hall to the other parts of the mansion, until he reached a spacious chamber, in which an ample fire was blazing, the light of which enables us to give a brief description of the apartment.

The massive wainscoting, together with the curiously carved chairs and other furniture with which the room was filled, gave rise to the name of the oak chamber. The apartment was larger than those of the present day, and the height was unusual. Its extreme cleanliness spoke well for Kaisa’s housekeeping. The good old lady had imbibed her master’s reverence for antiquities,

and paid great attention to the valuable pictures and other works of art which adorned the mansion. Over the fireplace a picture, in a frame of polished oak, represented one of the early lords of Staelburg Castle. His countenance was prepossessing and handsome, although pervaded by an expression of severity. He was clad in full armour, and the enormous handle of a ponderous sword appeared over his left shoulder. On the right side from the entrance hung a portrait, as large as life, of a man of majestic mien, the grandfather of the present lord. A smaller one, containing the likeness of Staelburg's father, taken when in the prime of life, was opposite. The young Count's mother was the subject of a glowing painting, which, though a meet object for criticism, was particularly valued by the affectionate son. Her countenance was classic and beautiful, and might, with a slight alteration of drapery, have passed for a Minerva or Hebe. A strong resemblance existed between mother and son, the ample forehead and eloquent eyes were common to both; but it cannot be denied that the charms of the former were far superior to the latter, as, indeed, they should be; for, to command respect by the possession of masculine virtues is more the property of a lord of the creation, than to gain affection by the exercise of fascinating charms, either of person or manner, which belongs by nature to that portion of the community honoured by the male sex with the appellation of the weaker vessel. Other small paintings and miniatures, varying in merit, were every where displayed. A superannuated lap-dog, cherished by Staelburg from having been a favourite of his mother, lazily whined out its recognition of its kind master.

"Poor animal!" said Staelburg, as he stooped to stroke his head; "you and I have known each other long; but I am afraid our intercourse will have a speedy termination."

The brute then gave another uneasy howl.

"Never mind, old pet! whatever may befall me, no one would be so cruel as to treat you with severity."

Here the grating of the lock announced the arrival of some other person, and an honest-featured dame, in an antiquated head-dress, plain stuff gown, and snow-white apron, made her appearance.

"Ah! woe is me, that I should live to see my old lord's son thus wounded, and, perhaps, it may be to death!" said the kind-hearted old woman, visibly affected on seeing a slight mark of blood on the young noble's attire.

"It is nothing, good Kaisa, but a little scratch in the arm. If it should chance to be beyond your skill, which I confess I doubt, I must suffer your friend Master Herr to pass his opinion on it," said Staelburg.

"And how did you get this wound—ay? I know. The blood is hot in young men; it is seldom otherwise. You have fought with the Baron of Würmer, on one of your old quarrels, to-night."

"No, no," replied the young man, rather testily, the colour mounting to his cheeks. Had my quarrel been with him, one or other of us should have come off worse than this. But make haste; leave off talking, and satisfy yourself as to the extent of the hurt. I am tired, and want rest."

"But what has been the matter, young sir?" she continued with mock severity, adhering pertinaciously to her question.

"Well, since you must know the facts of the case, Kaisa, and will not be content with such knowledge, you shall have the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," he continued, with a bland smile. "I have had an affray with those rascals of Ruffo."

"And by what means did you escape?" she asked him, in an interested tone.

"By the aid of Albert, the brigand chief,—as gallant a fellow as ever laid hand on weapon."

"Ah," continued the old dame; "you young gallants of the present day possess as much valour and as little prudence as the crusaders of old, of whom I have heard frequent mention in my younger days. The most romantic of the legends told me was one of a good knight, Arthur Hurlzbad by name, whose adventures, perchance, may both instruct and amuse you, and perhaps convince you that, however delightful it may be to acquire glory abroad, quite as much real pleasure attends a peaceful life at home."

"But you have not dressed my arm yet," said the young

Count, good humouredly, knowing Kaisa's mania for talking. "Do that first, and tell me your story afterwards. Although tired, I am not too fatigued to listen to it."

The aged dame, thus gently reproved, then ran for warm water, linen, and other requisites for the operation. She soon returned, and the dressing was speedily finished; and Kaisa ultimately acknowledged that the wound was not so dangerous as she at first took it to be. A servant then brought in the young man's supper, which consisted of a little loaf of brown bread, a few slices of dried venison, and a glass of water. Before commencing this frugal supper, Staelburg stirred the fire, which, together with the flame of a powerful lamp, filled the chamber with a brilliant light. Kaisa, meanwhile, had seated herself in a large high-backed chair on the side of the fire opposite to her young lord. All the preliminaries being settled, Kaisa, who had been for some time yearning to indulge her taste for the garrulous, related her story, which in our own words we have reserved for the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI.

Kaisa's Story.

THE Baron of Hurlzbad was a wealthy man, who owned considerable estates in Bavaria. His castle was large, and his character hospitable, and many were the guests that had banqueted in his hall. None went away dissatisfied from his generous board, and few could resist the loyal and jocose toasts with which he treated his friends. He was, however, little distinguished among his neighbours in this respect; for the rites of hospitality in the twelfth century (for then our story commences) were most sacred.

The old Baron's family consisted of two sons. The elder, by name Arthur, was twenty-two years of age, of a noble and chivalric disposition, and by no means destitute of good looks.

His younger brother, Adolphus, who was scarcely nineteen, was vastly different. Obstinate, though fickle, and envious, his conduct formed a striking contrast to his brother's nobler qualities. Handsome he was, but it was of a sombre caste. His eyes eclipsed his brother's in their beauty, and the varied expression which they wore threw a shade of interest over his whole countenance. From the imperious nature of Adolphus, frequent were the quarrels between the two brothers. The elder often endeavoured to appease his brother's animosity; but what Arthur did, Adolphus undid. Many of these failings may be attributed to his youth; but the old Baron feared, with justice, that evil passions had taken deep root in his headstrong son.

Neither of them had left the paternal mansion; but Arthur had often mentioned to his father his wish to commence his career of arms in the contest with the Saracens, under the banners of Richard of England, to which many aspirants for fame, from all parts of Europe, were hastening. As the only other son of the good old lord, Adolphus had no opportunity of bearing his brother company, and therefore assumed a more quiet conversation. Neither had he his brother's generous ambition to be distinguished by future honours.

One day their father, having returned from a long journey, requested the presence of his eldest son in the apartment which, from being the repository of the few manuscripts in the possession of the family, was styled "the library." Arthur immediately obeyed the summons, and was much surprised to be thus addressed:

"Arthur, my son, I have long observed the distaste with which you regard a tranquil life in our beloved country. I do you honour for the self-denial you have practised in endeavouring to conform to my wishes, and remain with me to cheer my declining years. I do not, however, exact so much from you, as to expect you on all occasions to submit your own inclinations to those of a peevish old man, especially as your younger brother is now of sufficient age to take your place. I have at last obtained for you a post in a small party which is about to join the army of the great warrior Richard of England. Your cousin Liebert heads the band, which is chiefly composed of his retainers."

"Thanks, thanks, my father, for your kind consideration!" said the sanguine young man, affected to tears. "How many vassals do you intend your son to take?"

"Ah, my son, men like not this perilous undertaking. I fear few will volunteer to accompany you; but you shall have the most I can procure."

The youth again expressed his acknowledgments, and inquired the time fixed by his father for his departure.

"In a fortnight your cousin starts; but I have not yet accomplished my self-imposed task. Follow me."

The Baron opened a large iron-bound door, and led the way into an adjoining apartment, which served as the armoury of the castle.

"Here you perceive the arms of your ancestors: not one of them ever disgraced his family by any unworthy action. Let their example be ever before you. I know I commit this spotless honour of the family into not unworthy hands."

"My utmost endeavours shall be employed to preserve it as it has been preserved by my illustrious ancestors."

"With God's help, my son, I trust you will succeed."

They then departed, and nothing more occurred on the subject, for the next day or two, beyond the communication of Arthur's good fortune to his brother. Adolphus manifested no surprise, and no alteration was visible in his demeanour.

A new and beautiful suit of armour was prepared for the young soldier, who was profuse in his expressions of joy when first he donned it. The men that were allotted to follow their young lord to the scene of strife were only sixteen in number. Next to their master himself, their wants had to be attended to. This was soon arranged, and every thing was ready for the time of their departure.

The appointed day at length arrived, and deep sorrow at leaving his father, brother, and home was paramount in the breast of the gallant Arthur. The bright visions of the future were swallowed up by this mournful feeling; for to a brave and ambitious mind Arthur added a warm and affectionate heart. His followers had been equipped in a handsome style, and they all bore the

cognizance of their lord—a bear rampant, recently adopted by the family, as an emblem of the stern courage which they were admitted on all hands to possess. Each man was armed with a stout lance, a sword, and dagger; the horses also, as well as the riders, were aptly caparisoned for the battle.

This goodly troop stood without the castle-gate, awaiting the arrival of the Count de Liebert and his train. The men had been bidding adieu to their wives and relations, and the evidences of recent tears were still on their manly countenances. A large crowd of peasants was gathered round the mail-clad warriors, anxious to pay every respect to the devoted band; for such an unusual circumstance as one of their nobles setting out for distant lands had occasioned great surprise to such of the villagers as could not remember the previous crusades. The young leader himself had not appeared, being closely closeted with his father. Adolphus was standing among the numerous serving-men, passing jesting remarks on the looks of the crusaders, and seemingly not caring much for his brother's departure.

A warder from the top of the highest tower of the castle gave the signal that the Count of Liebert's troop was in sight. Immediately every one not already mounted was upon his horse, and ready for the departure.

Arthur, when he heard of his cousin's approach, hurried with his father to the courtyard. He was already cased in steel, and his helmet was on his head; but his visor was up. Liebert had now arrived, and greeted his uncle and cousins in an affectionate but military manner. A handsome and goodly man to look upon was the Count of Liebert, who might be about thirty years of age. Possessed of a noble and generous disposition, he was much beloved by his uncle Hurlzbad and his cousin Arthur. Adolphus, however, from his constitutional reserve, was not so warm towards his cousin. The troop which Liebert commanded consisted of about a hundred men, most of whom were gathered from his own estate; the rest were volunteers from other parts, whom the military prowess of Liebert had attracted. They were generally a well-equipped and martial band. According to the plans formed by Liebert, and mentioned to the old Baron, they were

to join a large party of crusaders commanded by Leopold, Archduke of Austria, at Trieste, and, under his guidance, to proceed to the Holy Land, where he proposed to place himself and cousin under the protection of the lion-hearted King of England. He then urged upon the Baron of Hurlzbad, that they must make the most of their time, for they had but little to spare.

The old man, then turning to his son, said, "Let me bless thee, my son."

Arthur reverently knelt down, and received his father's benediction in tears.

"May God on high bless you, my son, and lead you in the way of truth! May He bless you, as I bless you!"

"Amen!" fervently replied both the young man and his cousin Liebert. The father then clasped his son in an affectionate embrace. The old man's cup of bitterness was filled to the brink when he bid his last adieu to his beloved son. Arthur next embraced his brother, who showed more sorrow at his departure than might have been apprehended from his behaviour so short a time before. Numerous were the blessings invoked on the head of Arthur by the peasantry, by whom he was almost adored.

Arthur mounted his beautiful and sleek charger; and, after having taken leave of all, closed his visor, that none might see the emotion the parting occasioned.

Before they had travelled four miles from Hurlzbad Castle, the followers of Arthur had contracted a warm friendship with those of Johan Liebert; and the young man himself was in deep conversation with his cousin. Nothing remarkable happened on the journey to Trieste. There they beheld a glorious sight; for thousands of warriors, in beautiful and shining armour, were assembled to embark in a numerous fleet of galleys, which lay in the offing. A little apart from this multitude could be perceived the general of the army, clad in finely wrought armour studded with gold, and surrounded by a small body of officers. He seemed to be directing the movements of this mass of soldiers, while mounted men were ever and anon engaged in communicating his wishes to the more remote detachments of the army.

It was some days, however, before the Count of Liebert's

troop sailed, and the ship in which they embarked was one of those particularly ordained to guard the galley of the Archduke of Austria. They arrived in the Holy Land in safety, with the exception of a little damage done them by occasional tempests. The French army, under Philip II., had already taken up their quarters on Oriental soil; but the English army had not yet arrived. Some time being taken up in disembarking and arranging his army, Leopold did not immediately join the allied sovereigns.

In fact, the latter did not regularly begin active operations till Richard himself came. But, on his arrival, the misfortunes which had previously attended the champions of the Cross were counterbalanced by their present victories: most of their latter success was owing to the bravery and martial experience of the English king.

The Count of Liebert, on the arrival of this great warrior, immediately placed himself and troop under his command. They had hitherto abstained from much intercourse with their former companions; and by feigning to be in the pay of the English king, and adopting other names for himself and Arthur, Liebert trusted to avert the jealousy of the Archduke of Austria. Richard himself, was the only one who was fully acquainted with the facts of the case. Their followers also were strictly charged, under pain of punishment, to divulge the name of their master to none. The motive of the young crusaders, in thus avoiding recognition, was, their desire of acquiring a knowledge of war, and some slight renown, which they would not get so well and quickly under any other leader than Cœur de Lion. Had they proclaimed their German origin to the jealous nobles who surrounded their idolized monarch, the fierce spirits of the islanders would have been roused by the king taking any others than those of their own nation into his confidence. The knowledge possessed by the young Germans of the Norman-French of the period, convinced most of the English knights that the strangers must be some of their countrymen in command of German auxiliaries. Richard took this party under his own especial care, and had their tent pitched close to his own. This familiarity served further to

confirm the idea of their being of English origin. They were not long awaiting an opportunity of distinguishing themselves. It happened that after a hard-fought field, in which the Christians obtained a slight advantage, a body of Saracens were advancing against a small body of their adversaries, who, thinking the victory decisive, had ventured beyond their usual bounds in quest of water.

The watchful Richard, careful of the lives of his troops, though personally rash, feared, from their long absence, that some evil had befallen the party. He therefore detached De Liebert and Arthur, who were in attendance upon him, at the head of their retainers, to the relief of the missing soldiers. The suspicions of the English monarch proved correct; so unexpected was the onslaught of the Pagans, that the followers of the Cross were in a very unfit state for defence. The fleet steeds of the Saracens proved superior to the jaded chargers of the Christians; and the keen scimitars of the former were dexterously applied to any unguarded point. The appearance of Liebert's band totally changed the aspect of affairs. Their long lances made fearful havoc among the Pagans, whose bare breasts were open to every attack. Although much valour was displayed on both sides, the Cross again triumphed over the Crescent. Both Liebert and Hurlzbad acted with consummate bravery, and contributed mainly to the success of the day.

Richard received them warmly, and bestowed great praise on the courage they had shown in the fight.

On the following day he enrolled them among the knights, who were distinguished from their fellows by a broad garter over their hose, and who formed the first members of the Order of the Garter previous to its final adjustment by Edward III.

In many subsequent expeditions, both of the cousins signalled themselves greatly. A party being detached to assist the King of France in a special undertaking, the Count de Liebert was, at his request, included in the number. The young Hurlzbad was thus alone, under the eye of Richard, after the departure of his cousin. Many were the dangerous but successful exploits which he performed, and for all of them he received due encouragement

from his renowned commander. He was present at the siege of Acre, and by his courage contributed greatly to the taking of that celebrated fortress. After its capture, the King of England retired to the plains near Jerusalem, and Arthur Hurlzbad followed in his train; but his cousin Liebert had not yet returned from his expedition. Here Arthur took part in all the battles in which the lion-hearted King loved to engage, and performed the service of aide-de-camp to Richard himself. At length a temporary cessation of hostilities ensued, and a short truce was proclaimed, on account of the illness of Richard. During his sickness, none were more attentive to his wants than Arthur of Hurlzbad. He procured, at the risk of his life, the most delicious fruits, which many longed to obtain, but were appalled by the almost insurmountable obstacles which attended the accomplishment of their wishes.

Notwithstanding all his care for the King, he was not allowed to be long in his company; it being the opinion of the leeches that his attendance was not advisable in the monarch's present state. The young knight, therefore, had much leisure on his hands. In vain he tried to wile away the time by reading and other studies. Few manuscripts were to be obtained, and these were speedily exhausted. Botany was a favourite pursuit of Arthur, and one which the nature of the country enabled him to study to advantage. One day, while making his observations on a plant which he had discovered, he saw the train of the Queen Berengaria passing by the entrance of his tent. Impelled by curiosity, he essayed a glance at the beautiful throng. One amongst the number particularly attracted his attention, and his gaze, notwithstanding his faint endeavours to the contrary, he could not avert from her. The object of his attention was well worthy of his look, and of a country boasting so much of beauty as England. She possessed a fine figure, and her countenance was both remarkable for its beauty and expression of nobility. Her plain white mantle admirably became her stately form, and she figured as the belle of a bevy of damsels who would have done no discredit to Cynthia. Perceiving his protracted gaze, a beautiful blush came over her features. Arthur, in his turn, not without

some reason, reddened, and a bewitching smile played upon the features of the young girl as she beheld the embarrassment of the stalwart warrior. She was soon lost to his sight; and Arthur turned back to the interior of his tent, not to resume his botanical studies, but to indulge in surmises as to the name and condition of the fair one. The beauty who had deprived the world of the sapient observations of the studious soldier was the daughter of a wealthy English baron, by name Roger de Mowbray, who had followed his king from England, and who was now in the tents of the crusaders. He was one of Richard's wisest counsellors, and one who, from possessing a contempt of danger akin to his own, only somewhat more tempered with prudence, was a great favourite with the affable monarch. His daughter's name was Edith, and she was one of the maids of honour to Berengaria, the wife of the lion-hearted King of England. As the father was esteemed by his royal master, so was his daughter beloved by her royal mistress.

To return to the immediate subject of our tale, we may add, many days rolled by without our young knight again beholding one who had already taken so deep a root in his affections, and who, if the truth were known,—such is the tacit freemasonry of love,—was not quite averse to any proposals he might make.

A few weeks must now be dispensed with, and we wish our readers to imagine that the recovery of Richard was complete. The first act of his convalescence was to proclaim a tournament on a scale of some magnificence, which occasioned a great stir among the crusaders. The preparations for this expected season of festivity served to dispel much of the monotony which had so long oppressed Arthur of Hurlzbad. Once only had the love-stricken young man seen Edith Mowbray, and then the time was too limited, and the place too public, to admit of any more serious conversation than the courtesies of the day, which, however, were received in a manner that the sanguine crusader interpreted as favourable to his hopes. On the strength of this doubtful encouragement, the enamoured knight had ventured to mention his passion, and beg for an opportunity of urging his suit in person. The answer to his letter had not yet been received, but was

anxiously expected. The day appointed for the tournament was a week hence, during which nothing was to be heard but the din of the armourer's hammer, together with a musical accompaniment, produced by workmen of other denominations pursuing their various noisy trades. At length the long-expected day arrived, and a beautiful one it was for their operations. Early in the morning, carpenters and artificers of all kinds and of all nations were busily employed. They had worked with good will, and so speedy were their movements that an extensive and admirable tiltyard had been constructed before eleven o'clock. The seats of the spectators had been so provided that they could suffer nothing from the heat of the sun or the violence of a storm. For the combatants, small tents had been reared, in which to arm and equip themselves. Richard had taken especial care that his young knight, Arthur Hurlzbad, should have his share in the approaching combat. Thus, by the foresight of that monarch, a commodious tent had been provided for him, and his page Martin was busily engaged in fastening the rivets of his master's armour therein, when the King of England entered. He was welcomed with respectful courtesy by its owner.

"Well, Arthur," said the King, in a familiar tone, "I hope you may win something from the hand of the Queen of Love and Beauty. You know our Lady her Highness Berengaria is she who awards the honours to those who earn them."

"Sire," replied the young man, in a tone of some slight disappointment, "I was not aware that her highness, your royal consort, was the queen of the day; but since such is the case, my best efforts shall be employed on the occasion."

"At any rate, sir," said the King, playfully, "I expect you to do your devoir as a gallant knight—such as I have seen you prove yourself in many fights around our person."

He then prepared to depart, but stopped, and turning to the young knight, said: "The routine of business to-day is, that during the first part single courses will be run; and after they are ended, and the combatants have partaken of refreshments, a general mêlée will follow. I have selected you as one of my party; for I head one, while my brother of France commands

the other. But farewell for the present: I shall see you again before the *mêlée* begins." So saying, he left the tent and its occupier, the latter wrapt in his meditations, which were manifold.

Meanwhile the spacious galleries surrounding the lists were nearly filled, and the arena beyond the barriers which secured the lists was crowded with the common order of soldiers, who, by the kindness of the King, were permitted to behold the scene. As yet none of the combatants had made their appearance, which the spectators hoped would not be longer delayed. But their wishes were not so soon to be gratified; for the Queen of Love and Beauty had not yet taken her place on a superb throne which had been expressly made for her and the occasion. When she came, however, with her train, which embraced the maidens of the noblest families of England, she was hailed with a universal acclamation. Amongst them could be perceived the pale, but beautiful, features of Edith Mowbray. Her father was riding round the lists, surveying the performances of the workmen, and remedying any defect that would call forth the disapprobation of his sovereign. Presently a flourish of trumpets was heard; the cloth which shaded the tents of the several combatants was drawn aside, and a knight presented himself, armed *cap-à-pie*. Edith, when she saw the stately and admirable form of Hurlzbad, could not prevent a flush of pride from overspreading her pale countenance. Nor was it unnoticed by the young knight himself; for the blood rushed to his cheeks with fearful rapidity. This emotion, however, was concealed by his visor, which was down.

All the knights-combatants were splendidly equipped, and their golden embossed armour shone nobly when the rays of the sun poured upon those about to engage. None shewed themselves to better advantage than our young hero. He bore on his shield, in addition to the red cross, his paternal coat of arms; and the bear rampant shewed prominent upon his helmet.

All preliminaries being settled, the combat began. The first course run was between an English knight and one of Gascony. The Frenchman, after a short encounter, was dishorsed. Three others followed, in one of which the Count of Liebert figured bravely, having defeated his antagonist in the first onset. It

was now Arthur's turn, and taking a short look at Edith, who was paler than ever, he prepared for the encounter.

His antagonist, who had acquired much honour in one of the preceding courses, was an Englishman. Grasping firmly his lance, Arthur awaited the signal to start from his post. It was not long delayed, and when it was given, both knights rushed forwards. Hurlzbad's spear struck the beaver of his opponent, who slightly reeled, and shivered against the steel. On the other hand, the young man received his adversary's blow on his shield, against which also the weapon shivered. Fresh lances were given to each champion, and the combat was renewed. The advantage this time was on the side of Arthur, who made his opponent swerve on either side in such a manner as to cause himself to be proclaimed the victor. Several other single courses were run; but Hurlzbad did not again figure in either of them. According to the King of England's direction, sumptuous refreshments had been prepared for the champions at the close of the first part of the entertainment. After having partaken of the viands, they again armed themselves for the *mêlée*. Soon all in the lists was in order, and the respective troops had taken their positions.

The band of Richard comprised twenty of the best lances of England, Wales, and Normandy, and the young Hurlzbad,—in all twenty-two. That of Philip of France was composed of twenty-one knights, chiefly of Gascony, Languedoc, and Burgundy; and his troop, in point of equipments, was a body of gentlemen of whom any nation might be proud; and their skill in arms made them anything but despicable opponents.

The trumpets sounded, and the mock battle began, with great energy on both sides. Richard's right arm, which was "no respecter of persons," performed wonders; and knight after knight fell beneath his blows. The French party behaved well and courageously; and notwithstanding all the exertions of Richard and his followers, the English ranks were greatly thinned.

Among Philip's party were three gentlemen of Brittany of gigantic height and strength. As yet only one of them had felt the prowess of Richard, and had owned himself defeated by that doughty monarch. The battle now grew desperate, and on both

sides many were dishorsed; but still the party of Philip maintained the advantage they had acquired in the beginning. Arthur, meanwhile, fought with his usual courage, and had succeeded in vanquishing a knight of Picardy, of great repute. Edith Mowbray was no disinterested spectator of the scenes; and her cheek, by its rapid changes, gave evident proof to an attentive observer how the battle went.

So long and so well had the battle been waged, that only Richard and Arthur remained on the one side, and Philip of France and two knights, including one of the three giants before mentioned, on the other. Edith saw how matters stood, and looked on with breathless anxiety. The other knight was overcome by the King of England, and one antagonist each still remained. Richard encountered his brother monarch, and left his young companion to deal with his gigantic adversary.

Arthur, Richard well knew, would be no meet antagonist for the King of France, their ranks being so discordant; but Philip knew well the force of Cœur de Lion's arm, and did not wish to have its levelling influence bestowed upon himself. He, therefore, prudently proposed to put a stop to the encounter, as far as he was concerned, under the plea of fatigue; to which Richard, fearing to give offence to the impetuous King of France, assented.

The two great monarchs, therefore, suspended operations, and watched with some anxiety the movements of their respective knights. Arthur displayed his wonted dexterity; but, on more than one occasion, the superior strength of his opponent gave him a temporary advantage. Whether, however, the proverb "nil desperandum" prompted the classic crusader to perseverance, we know not; but he still kept on with unabated ardour. The curiosity of the spectators was now at its highest pitch, for the victory was to be decided by single combat.

The hope that their champion might be the victor influenced the minds of all; but by impartial spectators it was supposed that the comparatively light form of Arthur must go down before the mighty force of the athletic Armorican. Both combatants, finding their horses unable longer to bear their weight, dismounted, and, having had a little time to breathe, resumed the battle on

foot with swords. The tiltyard rang again with their repeated blows. The combat in this manner was maintained for some time, till, by a sudden blow, Arthur cut the laces of his antagonist's helmet, which rolled to the ground. This being the case, the combat was discontinued, and Arthur was again declared the victor. Loud acclamations from his adopted countrymen greeted him as he assisted his gallant opponent to his tent; and the French, with that respect for courage which has at all times distinguished our magnanimous ally, could not but express their high opinion of his skill at arms. After the several knights had removed the dust contracted by their late exertions, and silence was proclaimed, or rather enforced, by the heralds, the rewards of the several champions were distributed. Eight knights were deemed worthy recipients of them. The first of these was Richard, who received from his beautiful spouse a ring of inestimable value, with some well-deserved compliments on his skill. Next to the redoubtable monarch came our hero, who was crowned with a string of large and lustrous pearls by the queen of love and beauty, who, at the same time, expressed her great satisfaction with his prowess and courage. This was not unnoticed by Edith, whose face beamed with pleasure.

The young knight was departing from the scene to his own tent, when a page drew near and gave him a billet. It was from Edith Mowbray, granting his most urgent request for an opportunity to pay his addresses in person, and appointing a suitable place near the encampment for the interview on the present evening. Arthur bade the page accompany him to his tent, and delivered to him a billet for his mistress, which, if not written on De la Rue's scented paper, had considerable pains bestowed upon it, declaring his pleasure to meet her at the appointed time and place.

A large and bountiful feast had been prepared, to which most of the knights and crusaders of note had been invited, amongst whom Arthur was, of course, included. The banquet, although sumptuous, had but few charms for the love-sick crusader. He was glad of an opportunity of withdrawing, and, on being questioned for the reason of his departure, assigned the fatigue consequent upon the exertions of the day.

Such was Arthur's punctuality, or rather his passion, that he was at his post before his intended; but he had not long to wait ere the sound of light footsteps reached his ear. He was not slow to urge his suit in forcible terms; but we must admit that, on this occasion, his otherwise fluent French was pronounced in so guttural a manner as to bear a strong resemblance to German. The language of love, however, "speaks to the heart alone;" and as such, was fully intelligible to the gentle Edith, who was certainly anything but displeased at the proposals of the gallant young knight. So effectually did Arthur speak in his interesting language, that the object of his addresses could but answer in a sweet affirmative; and thus, in a few minutes, a task which, with the sluggish mortals of the present time, would occupy some months, was accomplished, and Arthur became the accepted of the English belle. A happy man was he, as he retired to rest that night! And it might be that Edith was happy also; but, not possessing the gift of clairvoyance, we cannot reveal the secret of her heart.

We will leave the lovers to the full enjoyment of their happiness, and turn our attention to the castle of Hurlzbad, and the doings therein, since the departure of Arthur. Although absence may "make the heart grow fonder," affection requires some object near on which to dwell; so that Adolphus had, of late, been the only object left on which his father doated. But the good old Baron still took a lively interest in Arthur's welfare.

The younger Hurlzbad, therefore, in consequence of this indulgence, had nearly all after his own will. From having every wish anticipated, indolence and luxury expunged his former restless habits; and his proud nature considered self as the paramount, if not the only, object worthy of his consideration. His father, reduced by grief for the loss of his elder son to a state occasionally approaching imbecility, was in no fit condition to correct his beloved Adolphus, who, meeting with no reproof, revelled in dissipation.

Like a dutiful son, Arthur took every opportunity of communicating with his disconsolate father; and his letters afforded temporary joy to the bereaved parent. In one of these was men-

tioned his love for Edith Mowbray, whom the ardent lover described in such an impressive manner as to interest the old Baron considerably in his betrothed. Although retaining the good old Teutonic prejudice against foreigners, Hurlzbad could not withhold his consent to his son's union with so amiable a being as Edith Mowbray; and an affectionate letter conveyed to the young crusader his father's ready acquiescence in his wishes, together with his fond blessing on their heads.

The anxiety for his son ultimately affected the old man's health, as well as his spirits; and the worthy Baron of Hurlzbad became visibly weaker. His former cheerful character and joyous humour had totally vanished, and given place to the serious meditations and mental delusions of old age. Physicians from the capital were at length called down; but they soon perceived that no mortal skill could save the sufferer's life, which would be probably taken in a few hours,—so much had his malady increased by negligence. On hearing their opinion, the Baron of Hurlzbad, whose mind became stronger in proportion to the weakness of his frame, prepared to settle his affairs. His professional adviser was at hand, and, with every appearance of attention to his wishes, prepared his testament, which, after a feigned perusal by him, was duly executed by the patient in the presence of his confessor and lawyer. Murlshaw—for such was the name of the Baron's adviser—was unfortunately possessed of far more talent than principle; and he did not scruple to take advantage of the failing strength of his client to further his own ends. By procuring the Baron's signature to a document entirely at variance with his intentions, Murlshaw trusted to obtain such ascendancy over the weak-minded Adolphus as to be of great pecuniary advantage to himself. It will excite but little surprise when we mention that the effect of the will was to constitute Adolphus the successor to by far the greatest share of the family possessions.

Subsequent events justified the opinion formed by the medi-ciners; and in the space of another hour the Baron greatly declined.

Finding his end rapidly approaching, he called his son Adolphus to his bed-side, and charged him with earnestness, as he

would value the blessing and avoid the curse of a dying man, not to attempt to defraud his brother of any part of his inheritance.

Adolphus, deeply impressed with the solemnity of his father's injunctions, seriously undertook to observe strictly his intentions in all things.

Shortly after, the Baron having received absolution from the monk, with a firm reliance on his son's promise, slept with his fathers. The funeral of the deceased took place soon after, and Adolphus of Hurlzbad, clad in full panoply of woe, attended as chief mourner, acted with every appearance of profound sorrow, and, in reality, was much affected. After the last office which man can render to man had been performed, the members of the household retired to the library, to hear Murlshaw expound the last wishes of the respected noble. To the amazement of all, even of Adolphus himself, the money and personal estate of the deceased, with a very slight reservation in favour of Arthur, was bequeathed to the younger son. The estates also, which had always been considered as the indefeasible bithright of the heir, were devised to Adolphus,—an exception being made of one mansion, with the lands belonging, which had been used by the deceased as a hunting-lodge. This alone was left to Arthur; the reason for such unexpected conduct being mentioned in the will to be the anger of the parent at Arthur's contemplated marriage without his sanction. The confessor, who was present at the execution, though not at the preparation of the will, and acted as secretary to the Baron of Hurlzbad, protested that the deceased was decidedly favourable to his son's marriage with the beautiful English girl. He also stated that, as far as he could judge from the Baron's communications to him, it had ever been his intention that his elder son should come into possession of the whole of his patrimony, and should also participate with Adolphus in his personal property, since he observed that Adolphus had wasted the amount of his share in the father's lifetime. Although the looks of the auditors showed their concurrence in the priest's opinions, none spoke; and Murlshaw, having completed his task, deferred breaking his schemes to Adolphus until a more convenient opportunity, and

departed. Father Heinrich, finding Adolphus lost in thought, with great benevolence approached him ; and, hoping to prevail upon him to do justice to his brother, said :

“ You may be aware that, at the time of your father’s death, he could never have intended you to become entitled to the whole of his property. It is certainly so expressed in his will ; but such circumstance must either be the result of mistake, or, I am unwilling to suggest, intentional fraud. Your father could never have been annoyed with your brother’s intended marriage, since it was only a few weeks ago I communicated to Arthur his decided approval of it. Had it been otherwise, your brother has acted dutifully in asking my lord’s consent ; and a good father would never have disinherited his son on so slight a ground as his forming an attachment to which the parent was averse.”

Adolphus, who remembered the promise made to his dying father, answered with warmth :

“ Faults I have, holy father : they are neither few nor slight. But I will not add to them the sins of perjury and fraud. If it can be proved that my father really meant my brother to succeed to his property, his intentions shall be strictly carried out. But, so soon after my poor father’s funeral, I am almost inclined to consider any allusion to the subject indelicate.”

Trusting to the young man’s promise, Father Heinrich left him. Unfortunately, however, for Adolphus, the next counsellor he met was of a very different character ; for, some time afterwards, Murlshaw called upon the young Hurlzbad, but found him fixed in his resolution to do right to his brother. Murlshaw was a man of tact as well as knowledge ; and he felt, to insist upon the subject in Adolphus’s then turn of mind would be to defeat his own ends ; for he well knew the perversity of the young man’s disposition. He therefore blandly suggested that it would be a piece of romantic folly in him to deny himself the bounty conferred upon him by the father, since it was obvious that his injunctions concerned only the reduced share which would come to his brother. With an appearance of respect for Adolphus’s integrity, Murlshaw again quitted him, rejoicing in the idea that the flimsy show of rectitude preserved by his victim must either

be subdued by his own natural depravity, or the arts of the wily Murlshaw. In the former view of the case he was not far from right, for about a month after the death of the Baron of Hurlzbach, loud shouts of revelry were heard in the castle of the late Baron. Adolphus was not so scrupulous with regard to his companions as to his fraternal duty. Unmindful of the decency required by the death of his father, all money to which he considered himself rightfully entitled was devoted to prodigality and dissipation; and as long as it lasted, Adolphus had no lack of friends, or, as he might think, happiness.

At length, the drafts he was making on the late wealth of his father worked a great decrease of the original substance.

The small end of the wedge had been inserted into Adolphus's good resolution, and Murlshaw's suggestions became more and more justifiable to his perverted mind. He saw that in pursuing retrenchment, and acting as a reformed character, the ridicule of his companions would be turned against him; while in yielding to his wishes, he would be under the necessity of appropriating property not his own to his vicious purposes. Addison says, "the woman that deliberates is lost:" well would it be if woman were the only creature lost by deliberation! Like most weak minds, Adolphus was proof against argument, but not against ridicule; and the next wrong step taken was to apply to Murlshaw, instead of Father Heinrich, for advice. Murlshaw's counsel was like that of the lying prophets. He congratulated his dupe on his getting the better of his idle fancies, and offered to place in his hands all the money of the old Baron he then held, except the pittance which his prudence had reserved for Arthur. "If every man has his price," this bait was too tempting for Adolphus,—he accepted the money. Whatever justification his conduct might have had, from his having received no actual notice of Murlshaw's fraud, this miserable excuse was soon withdrawn. Finding the young man too much involved in difficulties to act with liberality towards him, the unprincipled counsellor, whose cupidity was equal to his treachery, made a claim for reward. An angry demand of the reason on which he rested his claim produced a full explanation of the scheme practised. Leonora Concini was

not far wrong in making an involuntary comparison between magic and the influence obtainable by a strong mind over a weaker. This fearful spell Murlshaw used with dexterity; and such a charm did he throw over his behaviour, that the giddy Adolphus was ensnared. Instead of rejecting the gold with disgust, his weaker nature conquered: one share was bestowed on Murlshaw, and the other provided means for Adolphus to continue his bacchanalian orgies. Riches—the *irritamenta malorum*—had thus an easy conquest over the good intentions of young Hurlzbad. Conscience being thus overcome, was less loud in its remonstrances in future; and had it not been for the integrity, or perchance the worldly wisdom, of the parties to whom the misguided young man tried to sell or pledge his estates, it is most probable that but little would have remained to him of his illgotten wealth. So much, indeed, did the love of money increase with its possession, that it was only at the instance of the crafty Murlshaw that the small share bequeathed to Arthur was spared. Murlshaw knew the unsuspecting nature of the young soldier, and trusted, by an appearance of justice towards him, to avert any lingering doubts he might have touching the *bonâ fides* of the will. In this manner the young man still continued in his licentiousness, without any feeling of remorse, thinking himself secure from interruption or punishment, except in consequence of any betrayal by his guilty accomplice, whose silence he thought he had abundantly secured. Thus time flew by; and as the deceased Baron was in affluent circumstances, the resources of Adolphus were not expended, notwithstanding his profligacy.

His career of vice was, through the diminution of his finances, approaching its end, when the news reached him that his brother's arrival might be shortly expected. This came like a thunderbolt on the guilty young man, and he looked around to his former friends to comfort and advise him; but they, congratulating themselves on having so long feasted on his bounty, deserted him. Murlshaw alone, who considered himself free from detection, animated him to hope that he might escape with impunity. Even their fellows regard the wicked with suspicion; and Adolphus feared lest, having proved himself faithless in one

instance, Murlshaw should betray him into the hands of his injured brother.

Meanwhile, Arthur followed the valiant King of England in all his engagements with the enemy, cheered in each combat by the thoughts of Edith Mowbray, who stedfastly rejected the proposals made her by warriors with long weapons and longer pedigrees,—Norman, German, Saxon, Celt, and Frank,—who all boasted to be the accepted of the English belle.

One day, whilst lazily reclining in his tent, and indulging in those meditations for which the sultry climate of the East is so favourable, he was aroused from his musings by a messenger. He was one of the order employed in bringing letters from those who could write, and messages from those who could not, to the crusaders, from their absent friends, and whose approach was everywhere regarded with joy. The primitive postman held in his hand a letter, which he gave to the young soldier, who, recognising the impression of his father's seal, was soon devouring its contents. Such was his abstraction, that it was necessary for the merry fellow who acted as minstrel, desrour, and messenger, to call his attention to the fact of his having received no remuneration. Dismissing the man with the payment of a merk, which was some three times his ordinary recompense, he continued his investigations of the contents of the epistle. It was the last one indited by the Baron of Hurlzbad, in which was contained his sanction to his son's marriage. When the young man came to this part, his exuberant glee got the better of what little German reserve he retained, and he broke out in warm eulogiums of his father's kindness. He determined to acquaint his betrothed with the joyful news; after which, he trusted she would fix the happy day for their espousals. It was not until the evening that he succeeded in meeting with Edith, and, with all a lover's impetuosity, urged upon her the advantage of a speedy union, since all obstacles were now removed. Edith was no coquette; but, in common with the rest of her sex, she had a great objection to anything like compulsion. She therefore declined to bring matters to a close until her lover should be formally introduced to her father in that capacity. Although the Baron of Mowbray

was well acquainted with Arthur's motives towards her, nevertheless to him was Arthur compelled to apply for his consent to his daughter's marriage. Roger de Mowbray—to whom, indeed, his lovely daughter had communicated the secrets of her heart—was delighted to think that Edith had made so prudent a choice from among her numerous suitors. He had always admired Hurlzbad's stalwart frame and knightly bearing, and he was proud to have the opportunity of calling so fine a young man his son-in-law. He was a hearty, good-tempered, but shrewd veteran, and a good model of an Englishman; and there were few better, braver, or wiser men, in the combined armies of the crusaders, than the bluff Baron of Mowbray. Much as Arthur before respected the sturdy Englishman, he thought, as the honest warrior laid his hand, which had so well wielded his weighty battle-axe, upon Arthur's head, and gave him every encouragement in his suit, that the King of England himself could not be more his benefactor. Of course the young man did not fail to inform his future father-in-law (as he had before done to the daughter) of his real name and country.

At length the crusaders became sensible that want of money and want of men would prevent the further execution of their schemes; and Richard of England, deserted by his brother monarch of France, and greatly crippled in his finances, prepared to return.

Amongst other affairs, however, the gracious King did not neglect to assist Arthur in prevailing upon the timid Edith to fix a day for their nuptials. Richard had the satisfaction of witnessing the union of his young protégée to the daughter of his old friend; and, in fact, condescended so far as to give away the bride. A handsome wedding-present was bestowed upon the blooming Edith by the generous King; and the bountiful Queen Berengaria testified her approbation of the bridegroom whom her fair waiting-maid had chosen, by such an offering as was worthy of her rank and munificence.

For the space of a week, nothing occurred to mar the happiness of the young couple. But no pleasure is without alloy; and, at the expiration of that time, Arthur received the sad news

of his father's death. His grief was long and heavy; and the gentle and affectionate Edith, unable to dispel, could only share, his sorrow. An opportunity presenting itself, by the return of the Count de Liebert, Arthur wrote to Adolphus to prepare him for his arrival. Having first tendered his services as the guide of Richard on his homeward journey, which were courteously declined, Arthur took leave of the King of England, his worthy father-in-law, and his other foreign friends, with many tears. A short time sufficed for his retainers to prepare themselves for their joyful return; and amidst the good wishes of all, the gallant German and his weeping English bride started for the native country of the former.

On Arthur's arrival at Trieste, he was met by a messenger, who delivered him a letter from Murlshaw, informing him of the contents of his father's will. On perusal of the letter, Arthur's countenance deeply changed, which his wife, with all a woman's fondness and penetration, observed, and gently asked him to make her the confidant of his new affliction. Misfortunes are greatly reduced by the timely condolence and counsel of one dear to us; and so earnestly did Edith impress upon her husband her unalterable affection for him, in riches or poverty, that he ceased to trouble himself much on the subject, and resolved to be guided by her advice, and settle in his new abode, before making any minute inquiries concerning the will of his father. Very different were the feelings with which the vassals regarded their return to their families: to them all was happiness; they pictured to themselves the bliss of again beholding those dear to them. It being but little out of his route, Arthur agreed to accompany them to the castle of Hurlzbad, intending to call upon his brother at the same time. After a journey of no very long duration, the castle came in sight, and bitter emotions crossed the mind of the young Baron—for such was Arthur now—when he beheld the venerable structure. "There," said he, showing it to Edith, "is the abode of my late father; and there it is that my brother Adolphus now dwells. What induced my beloved parent to deprive me of it, I know not."

"Surely some deception must have been practised in favour

of your brother Adolphus," put in the musical voice of Edith. "Your good father would never have disinherited you without a cause."

"Nay, I cannot suspect Adolphus of such baseness. Certainly, he has not always acted the part of an affectionate brother; but I do not believe him capable of such an act," replied Arthur.

"Such conduct would be far from brotherly," remarked Edith.

"You will see I shall meet with a hearty welcome from him, which will, I doubt not, be extended to the bride of his brother."

On their arrival at the castle, however, no preparations were made for their reception, and Arthur was compelled to send a man-at-arms to demand admittance for himself and train. The porter, a surly and obstinate man, who had obtained that post since the old lord's death, refused them entrance, stating that his lord was from home, and that, during his absence, he had strict orders to admit no one. Arthur now rode forward, and explained to the janitor the relationship he bore to his lord and master, and, moreover, that he had just returned from fighting in defence of the holy Cross; but all arguments were in vain.

It was with a dejected and sorrowful air that the young crusader departed from his father's castle with his bride, taking but one attendant, who, having no near relations living, declined to leave him. Edith made no remark, but her expressive eye betokened great disappointment.

Arthur mentioned to his attendant his intention of repairing to the residence spared him by Murlshaw, and which was known as Strattenstein. For some time he was unable to give utterance to his indignation; but at length he observed: "This is but a sorry greeting to one whose countrymen have behaved so hospitably to me in distant lands. But I hope my Edith does not consider all Germans such as my misguided brother Adolphus."

"Nay," answered she; "in Germany I see in part the home of my ancestors, and I am unwilling to judge all by so unfavourable a specimen as your brother. Of *one*, at least, I thought better, or I should not now be on German soil."

"Thanks for the kind compliment!" said the affectionate husband. "At least, I can offer you a roof for shelter; but, I fear me,

can promise but little else. Take the will for the deed ; and believe me, that I consider the finest halls in Germany unworthy of you."

A smile, such as that which had first captivated Arthur, rewarded him for this last tender speech.

They were soon in sight of Strattenstein, and, although less handsome and spacious than the family castle, it was in no way to be despised. It was in good repair, and generally commodious ; and its situation commanded an excellent view of the surrounding beautiful scenery. The grounds attached were small, but fertile ; and there were many little woods, composed of elegant larch-trees, amongst which game of all sorts abounded.

To Arthur's great joy, he found the furniture, which had belonged to his father, still remained ; and it was very satisfactory to him to hear Edith's expressions of contentment, that their wanderings were brought to a close. Some few domestics were in occupation of the mansion, and took every means to secure the comfort of their gentle mistress.

One of Arthur's first acts, after making all necessary arrangements for the convenience of his small household, was to call upon his numerous friends. His, unlike those of Adolphus, forsook him not, when fortune ceased to favour him. Adversity, among other advantages, is a sure test of friendship ; and it was gratifying to Arthur to receive a cordial welcome from his former acquaintances. One of his earliest and dearest friends was a young man named Herr Thiebald, the orphan son of a wealthy farmer, who, by the kindness of a relative, the abbot of an adjacent monastery, was permitted to enter the establishment as a student of the law, for which he displayed a great aptness. Herr was then at home ; and Arthur, on reaching his house, found him seated under a lime-tree, busily engaged in the study of that newly discovered treasure of the civilian's, *Justinian's Pandects*. A warm greeting awaited him, after which Thiebald inquired how long his friend had returned from the wars, observing that he had made almost daily inquiries of the porter of Hurlzbad, but was not aware that his arrival had taken place.

"I am not an inmate of Hurlzbad," said the young Baron. "I demanded admittance, but it was denied me."

"How so, Arthur?" said Thiebald. "Have you had any rupture with your brother, that he should treat you in so inhospitable a manner?"

"My dear Thiebald! have you lived in such seclusion as to be unaware of the disposition my father made of his property? Do you not know that, with the exception of the mansion of Strattenstein, in which I now reside, and a small sum of money, my brother Adolphus succeeded to the whole of his possessions?"

Thiebald somewhat reddened as he answered: "I must apologise for my ignorance; but my attention being engaged on other things, I have paid little heed to the gossip of the day. You do not say that your father deprived you of your patrimony?"

"Such, I regret to say, is the case. And I was about to visit Murlshaw, my father's adviser, to learn the circumstances, and obtain, if possible, an inspection of the instrument. I shall be glad of your society, if you can spare the time from your studies, and it may convince Murlshaw that we are not altogether so ignorant as to believe whatever he may think proper to tell us."

Thiebald's visage darkened as he heard the name of Murlshaw mentioned; and he answered, in a tone of no great respect for that worthy, "I doubt not the whole affair is a forgery; but I will be with you anon."

So saying, Herr Thiebald placed his book on a well-stored shelf, which contained numerous illuminated manuscripts of the ancient civil as well as the canon law, together with some few works on the general law of the German empire; and having donned his walking gear, prepared to accompany his friend.

On their way, Arthur duly informed the young civilian of every circumstance he knew touching his father's will; whereupon Herr Thiebald entered into a long argument concerning the right of parties to dispose of their land by will. He treated of all the works on the subject then in existence, and dwelling with some minuteness on fees being of an inalienable nature, at length quoted Tacitus and others to prove that any attempt to dispose of land by will must be of no effect. We will not follow him in all his reasonings, but we will inform the reader that his arguments enlightened his hearer almost as much as a long treatise on the

statute "de donis" would the unprofessional reader. Seeing Arthur did not fully comprehend his learned dissertation, he deferred the remainder of the subject until after a perusal of the document in question.

Murlshaw being at home, they were ushered into his business apartment, where they found him surrounded with parchments, busily engaged. He turned somewhat pale on beholding Arthur, and his confusion was in no manner diminished on recognising Herr Thiebald. Murlshaw, however, was a man of the world, and he very soon assumed all appearance of great indifference, and begged to know in what particulars he could serve the son of his good patron the Baron of Hurlzbad.

Arthur being averse to breaking the object of his visit, Thiebald commenced: "At the request of the present Baron, I have called to know if you have any objection to the production of his father's will, which, it appears, is in favour of my lord Adolphus."

Murlshaw fixed a penetrating glance upon the young advocate, and another on the silent noble; but being unable to read aught of their thoughts, he answered in a courteous tone:

"By all means. My lord will see the good Baron has taken an adverse view of his behaviour. My endeavours to obtain justice were disregarded, and the will which I now produce was the consequence."

He then tendered the will, which he had abstracted from one of his large iron chests, to Thiebald, who, with the avidity of a complete bookworm, dived deep into its mysteries. A slight smile of contempt played upon his countenance as he returned it to Murlshaw, who, thinking the danger past, said in a derisive tone: "Master Thiebald finds everything regular, does he not? The matter had my best attention. I have not even yet ceased to regret the Baron's harshness towards my lord; but, I assure you, I took every means to prevent it. I derived no benefit from the transaction, as you may see." Here Thiebald's eye fell upon a new chest, apparently a treasure coffer, which adorned the chamber, and an expression of unbelief strongly marked his open countenance.

"So far as the handwriting of the deceased goes, all appears right. But are you not aware, Master Murlshaw, of the inability of making real property the subject of a testament? If the Baron of Hurlzbad takes my advice, he will at once put aside the will, enter upon the property, and evict its present occupant."

At the time of concocting the instrument, Murlshaw little dreamt of its falling into the hands of Thiebald, whom he believed to be then completing his legal education at Vienna. But so far as legal diction could justify an illegal act, Murlshaw's document was not defective.

"I duly explained that fact to the Baron," said he, in answer to Thiebald. "But we both agreed that, from the force of the language employed, there could be no doubt of the validity of the devise."

Thiebald was about to deny that construction, when he was interrupted by Arthur, who intimated that if his father meant to benefit his brother, no obstacle to his wishes would be interposed by him.

Murlshaw and Thiebald both stared with astonishment on hearing this generous resolution. The former, being of a selfish nature, believed any self-denial and forbearance impossible; the latter thought his friend must have dissolved partnership with his intellects, to behave with such romantic honour towards an ungrateful brother.

To the guilty Murlshaw's great relief, Arthur then informed him that, his interview having had a satisfactory termination, he would not further trespass on his time. Thiebald manifested a great inclination to bestow upon his brother lawyer his candid opinion of his conduct, but was again checked by his friend.

Thiebald's mind, unlike that of Murlshaw's, could respect, although he would never have imitated, Arthur's example. He could not, however, forego the latter part of his discourse; and he forthwith delivered to the young noble a further exposition of the respective rights of himself and brother. It appeared, Hudibras' maxim,

"A man may be the legal doner
Of everything whereof he's owner."

did not then hold good with regard to wills; and the eloquent Thiebald demonstrated, as plain as any pikestaff, that, even allowing the will to be obtained in a justifiable manner, it must fail, from the inability of the ancestor to disinherit his heir by will. Arthur, however, was obdurate; and the young civilian, appreciating the delicacy of his motives, with some slight reluctance abandoned a subject of so much interest to him. Arrived at Thiebald's residence, the friends parted; and Arthur returned to Strattenstein, with no compunctions of conscience on account of the step he had taken. Edith, also, was too honourable and disinterested to reproach him for his generosity, and for some time their happiness exceeded their means.

Honesty, or at least honour, is, after all, the best policy, as well as the best principle; and Arthur found himself, in the sequel, none the worse for his extreme liberality towards his brother.

Adolphus was weak-minded, and unable to resist temptation; but he was not altogether lost to every good feeling. Man frequently deviates from the path of rectitude, but he cannot entirely efface the image of the Creator from his breast. Since Murlshaw (having received his reward) had ceased to be so constantly in Adolphus's company, the latter had many misgivings as to the propriety of his retaining further possession of the wreck of his father's property. That "conscience which makes cowards of us all," had brought him to a more correct sense of his misconduct. Actuated by remorse, he resolved to throw himself upon his brother's mercy, and endeavour, in some measure, to retrieve his error by a frank acknowledgment of his fault.

It was a winter evening, when Arthur's small household, now augmented by the birth of a blue-eyed daughter, the image of her mother, was gathered before the blazing fire in the largest room in Strattenstein, when a domestic announced the approach of a stranger. No small consternation was occasioned at these tidings; for the arrivals of strangers were, "like angel's visits, few and far between." The visitor was of a commanding stature, rather inclined to be corpulent, and his eye wandered over the apartment, as if recognising remembrances and scenes painful to him. The light from the fire shining brightly on his

haggard features, at length revealed to Arthur his brother Adolphus.

Whatever feelings of resentment the elder brother might have harboured, were quite dispelled by the piteous tone in which the prodigal exclaimed: "Arthur, my much-injured but generous brother, forgive me!"

A warm embrace conveyed to him his brother's forgiveness far better than any words could have expressed; and the repentant Adolphus wept bitter tears of shame and sorrow upon his brother's shoulder. Arthur also shed tears, but his were tears of joy and pity, as he heartily assured him that he bore him no ill-will. Edith also, on beholding a reconciliation for which she had long hoped, could not restrain her emotion.

"Nay, Arthur," said Adolphus, in a husky and feeble voice; "hear my sorrowful confession, and you will spurn so miserable a wretch from your bosom. I cannot, indeed, hope for pardon, after you have heard all; but I shall at least have done you, in part, tardy justice; after which the cold grave will be the only place of rest for the perjured son and the unworthy brother. 'Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest,' shall I be screened from the reproaches which my black wickedness has deserved!"

"My dear Adolphus," said his brother, "compose yourself; and let me offer you some slight refreshment, ere you begin—if begin you must—a tale of such terrible excitement to you."

"Call me not 'dear!' such a term becomes only the pure and the virtuous. Offer me nothing; I have deserved nothing; I am not worthy even of the air I breathe, or the light I behold!" said the wretched young man, fixing his lustrous orbs, with an expression of horrifying anguish, upon his brother. "Hear me!" said he, in a tone of frenzy; "and then let me feel a brother's, as well as a father's, curse! The very stones cry out upon me, as it is for my perjury. Spare me! oh, spare me further torments!"

Having in some measure reduced his brother to calmness, Arthur heard, more in sorrow than anger, his confession. Edith was on the point of retiring; but she was stopped by Adolphus,

who bade her, almost imperatively, listen to his humiliating disclosure.

If Adolphus's guilt was heavy, so was his confession full, and his repentance sincere. He omitted nothing except Murlshaw's part in the transaction, the whole of which he ascribed to himself. Every aggravating circumstance he urged—his father's last injunction, and his gross treachery to his confiding brother. When he had completed his narration, Arthur, who believed his brother had been actuated by a wish to screen Murlshaw at the expense of himself, assured him of his full pardon. So free a forgiveness affected the penitent more than the most violent reproaches, and he wept, until, exhausted by grief, he became calmer and more rational.

The gentle voice of Edith, like oil upon the troubled sea, seemed music to his ears; and, at their earnest request, Adolphus became an inmate of the mansion that night.

Nothing, however, could satisfy Adolphus but an absolute resignation of all his estates and property to his brother. Being earnestly solicited to retain some portion for his own subsistence, if he declined to take up his residence with his brother, he ultimately made choice of the property which had been the demesne of Arthur during his own course of injustice. With this he endowed the monastery at which Herr Thiebald was studying, and, despite all entreaties to the contrary, entered himself as a brother of the order. All penances and mortifications which the flesh could endure were practised with the utmost severity—(let it be hoped that at last he saw the inutility of these austerities)—as a means of expiating his offence. Such, at any rate, was his piety and self-denial, that after the death of Thiebald's relation, he enjoyed for a long time the high office of abbot of the convent. On the death of Adolphus, he was greatly lamented by both rich and poor; and the pope, in honour of his devotion, canonised him by the name of St. Eugenius.

Arthur, thus restored to his possessions and honours, lived a long and useful life, and was, many years after his death, regarded almost as an idol by the peasantry, who held his benevolent lady also in the estimation she deserved.

As for Murlshaw, it was not so with him. Soon after the reformation of Adolphus, he was found dead in his apartment; his hands firmly clenched; his eyes started almost from their sockets; and every feature betokening extreme terror. Near him was the money-chest which held the fruits of his crime; the lid was quite open, and it appeared his last act had been to count the gold. His death, probably, was the result of epilepsy; but Kaisa, whose stories always savoured of the marvellous, did not scruple to assert that the ghost of the Old Baron of Hurlzbad called to him to follow his path to the grave. However this may be, few respected him. And Adolphus, as a further penance, read the impressive service of the church over the remains of his former accomplice.

"A very good story, Kaisa, and well told," said the young man, much relieved to find that the old woman had at length brought her prolix tale to an end. His supper had been long since finished, and he was glad of an opportunity of retiring to rest.

"I am glad it pleases you; it was a long one," returned Kaisa. "But I should think that your lordship wants rest, and I will order Fritz."

"In a minute Fritz was at the door, with a lamp in his hand, ready to conduct his master to his sleeping apartment. Staelburg, exhausted with the excitement and fatigue of the day, was not long in betaking himself to his bed, and was soon enjoying that sweet sensation, known in its full extent only to those possessing a body free from pain, and a mind free from care,—sleep.

CHAPTER VII.

The Morning.

WHEN our hero awoke (for on this occasion we cannot praise him for being an early riser), the sun was shining brightly on the casement, and spread its rays into the apartment. It was a noble and spacious chamber, the ceiling of which was ornamented by a magnificent cornice, representing the labours of Hercules. The walls were pannelled with dark oak, but that noble wood did not so universally abound in this room as in the one before spoken of. The furniture (of which there was but little in those days) was of superior quality. Of the marks by which a nobleman's chamber is usually distinguished, few could be noticed, except the admirable order with which everything was arranged.

One thing alone was sufficient to give evidence of the former splendour of the Count of Staelburg, namely, the beautifully carved chimney-piece. It was an elaborate work of art, representing the meeting of the Grecian chiefs on the Trojan plain, sculptured out of brilliant and spotless marble, and, placed in a clear and good light, the effect was most imposing. Opposite the window was a picture of the fall of Phæton from his chariot, executed by Titian in that harmonious style of colouring so peculiar to himself. A spirited representation of the death of Achilles hung on the right side of the door. On another side was a very exact resemblance of Staelburg Castle, taken by a wandering artist in return for the hospitality he experienced from one of the ancestors of its present possessor. As we do not profess to be well versed in antiquarian lore, we will not presume to state whether the structure looked better in its ancient or modern state.

On a book-shelf were eight or nine massive volumes, one of which was the family Bible, which, in defiance of pope and priest, had been attentively perused both by Staelburg and his ancestors; others contained the origin and rules of certain sports, which, if not quite in accordance with the opinions of Strutt, at least were very satisfactory to the reader. Among

them also were books of poetry and light reading—Tasso and Horace, both of whom were favourite authors with the young Count,—and to the study of which and other classics he frequently resorted, to beguile much of that time which would otherwise have passed heavily. There was also in the apartment an object which, from being regarded with great interest to its owner, should not be overlooked. It was a large walnut-wood chest, clasped with bars of iron, and secured by a padlock of an orthodox size. It contained the archives of the family, as well as the muniments to the title of such of the young noble's estates as remained in his hands. Certain other documents, probably "only of use to the owner," were deposited therein. And the whole chest was guarded with such an eye as one of those fabulous animals of old, 'yelept griffins, might be supposed to cast over the spot where his gold was secreted. But as Staelburg's family (unlike that of our Celtic neighbours) could lay claim to no more remote antiquity than Adam, and, moreover, as many of his ancestors were of rather less degree than princes, and perchance cared more to acquire the respect of the present by their deeds of valour, than to chronicle them for the benefit of posterity, as the manner of some is,—such a chest as we have described was quite adequate for the purpose for which it was designed.

He knew the human heart well who said, "Heaviness may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning;" and it was a fond and elegant conceit, that ministers of good take advantage of man's helpless state to bring virtuous and cheering thoughts to his mind. Staelburg arose in a more hopeful mood than that in which the previous night left him.

By the assistance of his valet, Fritz, he was soon attired in a hunting-suit of green, with boots and other articles of costume in accordance.

"A fine day for your sport, my lord!" said Fritz, presuming to hazard something on the strength of the cheerful countenance of his master.

"Yes, Fritz; the prospect is cheering; and I think that, if the wind be not too high, we may have good sport."

"Master Straussheim told me yesterday of a place where some fine stags consorted."

"Where is it, Fritz?" asked the young Count, with eagerness; for he was a keen lover of that species of venery which seeks more after the amusement to be derived from the chase than the good venison obtainable by the death.

"If you know the place which the woodcutters call the 'Thicket?'"

"I know it well; many a noble animal have I roused from his covert there; it is exactly the spot where I should expect a good hart to lurk."

"To the right of that is a smaller coppice," continued Fritz; "and there, Haust says, he tracked the slot of as fine a deer as the emperor could desire."

"Well, well; I will follow your advice," said the young man. "But as I must have some attendant, and there is no one who knows the woods as well as yourself, do you therefore equip yourself in a fitting costume to follow me."

The man bowed as he received this flattering eulogium, and withdrew to prepare his own toilet for the sport. Meanwhile the Count of Staelburg descended the stairs into the oak chamber, where the good housewife Kaisa had prepared breakfast. Whilst he is thus pleasantly engaged doing justice to the good cheer, we will make a closer investigation into the interior of the mansion, unless our readers would be particularly edified by a full, true, and particular account of the quantity of Wesphalia ham and Rhenish wine, which went the way of all ham and wine, to appease the appetite of the hungry noble.

In the hall, which was spacious and elegant, immediately over the door of the breakfast-room, was affixed the head of a wolf, the leer of whose eye, as it gazed from the stuffed pericranium on the surrounding objects, bespoke its proprietor to be possessed of of a disposition more formidable than amiable. The animal in question, after enjoying *otium cum dig.* in the adjoining forest, to the great terror of the population, had at length received a *ne exeat regno*, in the shape of a thrust from the hunting-spear of a former lord of the castle, who, pluming himself to some slight

extent on the feat, thenceforth assumed the wolf's-head as his crest. Around this relic of the defunct monster were suspended the antlered helmets of many of the more peaceful denizens of the forest; while the preserved skins of otters, slain in the adjacent river, formed a meet society to the remnants of these things gone by. Conteaux-de-chasse, spears for the boar and otter, were also arranged in a sportsman-like manner. We must not omit the "birding-piece" of the young noble, which, though considered the *ne plus ultra* of gun manufactory of the period, was, between us and the reader, rather a clumsy fabrication. Throughout the whole castle there were abundant proofs of the wealth and splendour of its former proprietors. The large servant's hall on Christmas-eve formerly contained as many jovial retainers, and could display as good ale and wine, as any establishment in Germany; but as Staelburg thought of his diminished acres and scanty income, notwithstanding the change which had latterly come over his circumstances, he could not but say "Ichabod!" There yet remained a library, which was often frequented, containing a number of books, both manuscript and printed, which would have realised we know not what from any black-letter bookworm of the present day.

By this time breakfast was finished; and our hero mounted his horse, and, followed by Fritz, rode off in the direction of Hardfels Castle, determined, notwithstanding the remonstrances of Kaisa, to join the chase once more before his departure from Baden. Profiting by last night's experience, he buckled on his trusty sword, and placed his petronels, well primed, on his holsters.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Hunt, and its Consequences.

STAELEBURG and his attendant rode fast, and in little less than half an hour they were in the courtyard of the castle of Hardfels. Here their ears were greeted by the calls of grooms, the orders of masters, the neighing of horses, and baying of the hounds in the kennel; and all appeared eager for the chase. Many of the rich neighbours of Hardfels had come to join their sport, and were now partaking of a suitable repast in the hall. Hardfels himself was too much engaged in diplomatic business to devote much time to the chase; but he knew the advantage of promoting unity amongst his neighbours, and conciliating their good-will, and therefore encouraged his son in all matters which might lead to so desirable an end. Staelburg did not make one of the banquetting party, but instantly sought out William, who was actively employed in seeing to the welfare of the steeds, as well as the riders, and communicated to him the events of the last evening.

"It is very strange!" said William, when Staelburg had finished speaking; "but I presume they merely intended to rob you."

"I think not, William," rejoined Staelburg. "My opinion is, their aim was more than that. It was my life that they wanted."

"Indeed!" said the other, in surprise.

"Yes," continued the young Count. "I repeat, it was for my life they attacked me; and had it not been for our friend Albert, I should not be here to address you."

"Think you so? What benefit would your death be to them. If such were their object, there must be some plot against you, Augustus."

"Very likely; and I think I can fathom it. If I am not greatly mistaken, the Count and Baron of Würmer are the conspirators."

"Assuming such to be the case, I am at a loss to discover what their motive can be. It cannot be your possessions, since they bear no relationship to you; and, indeed, if they should attempt to set up the doctrine of escheat, by which they have defrauded so many, you have an heir in your uncle at Leipsic."

"I am happy to say no relationship exists between us. But it is not my wealth they seek: they have greater views than that: their object, probably, is to obtain possession of your father's property."

"How!" exclaimed William, in surprise. "In what manner could your death put them in possession of my father's estates, to the detriment of myself and sister?"

"Do you not see, William, by my death the Baron of Würmer would gain your sister's hand without much trouble; for he has your father's consent?"

"But not mine!" said the heir of Hardfels, impetuously. "Bertha's brother will never allow her to marry a man she cannot find it in her heart to love,—the Baron of Hardfels, the Count and Baron of Würmer, notwithstanding."

"Nay, William," said Staelburg; "neither your sister nor father shall suffer any wrong, while I have an arm to prevent or avenge an insult. But if Würmer gains your sister's hand, your father must, as a matter of course, give her a dowry; and being wealthy, as he is, he will doubtless bestow upon her one worthy of a princess."

"My father must be the victim of some diabolical plot, that he thus disposes of his daughter's hand, his own possessions, and the happiness of us all, so madly," said William.

"Perhaps so," said Staelburg, seriously, but with great composure. But to our subject. These ruffians have once tried to take my life; they have been foiled, with some loss to themselves. Revenge they will endeavour to have; the attempts may be tardy, but, depend upon it, they will make at least one more attack on me."

"Think you they may obtain intelligence of to-day's hunt, and take advantage of it to put their schemes into execution?" observed William.

"Should such be the case, I have something here," replied the young Count, pointing to the whistle before mentioned, "from which I hope to obtain assistance, if needed. It was given me by Albert, after last night's occurrence."

An inspection of the article in question, and an explanation of its use, dispelled William of Hardfels' fears for his friend's safety. Apologising for the necessity of breaking off the subject, the young heir of Hardfels returned to the refreshment-room, to join the guests there assembled. As the Baron was at that time absent at Baden Baden, on business of importance, all things were committed to William; and none of the numerous sportsmen had any fault to find with the young man's hospitality. Good Canary, Burgundy, and other generous liquors, were freely produced, and as speedily discussed by his *pro tem.* guests, some of whom, by the fiery redness of their nasal organs, and the rotundity of their paunches, appeared to be zealous devotees of the jolly god. There the courtly gentleman and the honest yeoman were fortifying themselves in a substantial manner against the fatigues of the day. Of all sports none can compete with hunting, as a means of producing harmony and good feeling among the sons of Adam. Persons having the beautiful scenery, the fresh air, and so exciting a sport in common, cannot be actuated with any very unpleasant feelings towards each other.

Martin Strausshelm, a personage well known in the neighbourhood as the keenest sportsman and the readiest wit of the locality, was particularly engaged in making remarks touching the nature of the chase, and bestowing personal comments on his comrades almost in the same breath. His active grey eye soon discovered an object for sarcasm in a meagre and sallow individual, who, with his long spare fingers in constant motion, was preparing to wage *guerre à l'outrance* against the various delicacies under which the table almost groaned.

"Here is Herr Haust!" he exclaimed in a joyous tone, "his fingers itching to operate upon broken bones and other injuries which may befall those unfortunate persons who may sever their connexion with their steed. But I trust, good sir, we shall not want your skill; you had better remain in good quarters, and

keep company with the good cheer; and we will give you credit for talent in leechcraft, in which, upon a trial, you might be found wanting."

"I hope my aid can be dispensed with; but young blood gets narrow escapes. I think my time would be as well spent in attendance upon you, as regaling myself upon the viands here. What say you, Father Clement?" said he, addressing, in his turn, one habited as a priest of the Romish Church.

Father Clement was a man held in universal esteem by the neighbours, for his self-denying humility and unaffected piety; and an appeal from his decision on any subject was considered as little less than high treason. Whatever ridicule Martin might bestow on others, he had too much respect for the worthy priest to assail him with satire. Moreover, though a patient son of a severe Church, Father Clement was not one of those "bigots of the modern time," who treat every harmless art as a crime.

"You have spoken well, Master Herr," replied he, striving in vain to change the blithe smile which played upon his gentle countenance into an expression of solemnity. "Although we are aware that there is no good reason why a devout Christian should not enjoy a little relaxation, so that he infringe not the rules and canons of the Church, I agree with you, our time and talents are better employed upon our fellow-creatures than spent solely upon ourselves. Notwithstanding all Martin's insinuations, I have a great opinion of your skill in all things which appertain unto your profession; and I fear your services may be required by some of the rash youths who join your sport. However, it is to be hoped that your innocent amusement may have no unpleasant consequences. I am afraid, though, that your sluggish mule will keep you at some distance from the rest of the party."

Any further discussion on the matter was broken off by the entrance of one of the huntsmen, who announced that everything was now in readiness. The summons was gladly obeyed; and each son of Nimrod was soon in the courtyard, where such a jingling of stirrups, &c. was heard as to baffle all attempt at discussion.

As the joyous cavalcade proceeded to the woodlands, it was greatly augmented by the arrival of others, who, either from

modesty or lack of time, had been unable to partake of the preliminary repast. The horses which the sportsmen bestrode were, of course, of all sorts, from the well-bred and fiery coursers, which carried the more aristocratic part of the company, to the rough but hardy hacks which bore Martin Strausshelm and his associates.

Scarcely was Hardfels Castle a mile behind them, ere, one by one, a body of strangers, amounting to about ten in number, joined in the sport. The new comers were aptly habited, and extremely well mounted. No one could obtain any insight into their condition; and the favourite conjecture of the many hazarded on the subject was, that they were courtiers of the Margrave, who, unacquainted with the absence of Hardfels, were come with the intention of transacting diplomatic business with him, and, the better to preserve an incognito, had assumed the garb and were partaking of the amusement of sportsmen. Suffice it to say that the strangers displayed a skill in woodcraft, sufficient to corroborate the supposition of their being experienced huntsmen.

The hounds were of the fine old-fashioned breed, with thick, hanging lips, well-developed noses, strongly formed legs, and altogether admirably bred for quickness of scent, speed, and endurance, composing such a pack as would afford great satisfaction to Scrutator, or any other modern connoisseur in dog-flesh. The foresters and rangers attended in great numbers, for the purpose of driving the deer from his haunts. A short ride through that exquisite forest scenery for which Germany is so justly celebrated, brought them to the coppice mentioned by Fritz. After the services of the foresters had been put into requisition for a little time, a noble stag bounded from the thicket, tossing his amply antlered head as if in defiance of his assailants. The hounds followed him closely, giving tongue in a style with which even the fastidious Sir Roger de Coverley could find no fault. The hunters giving loud halloes to the dogs, set off briskly in pursuit; but the speed of the stag seemed to promise a long and lively chase. All set out together, but a very short time served to show the inequality of the steeds. As the Welshman told King James the First, "all were shintlemen, but their horses, Cot pless 'em,

were'nt alike." The field was widely scattered; but Staelburg, William, and their faithful attendants, Fritz and Karl, were about the foremost. Next to them came, at some little distance from each other, the mysterious strangers to whom we alluded, and whose good steeds enabled them to maintain a respectable position. Enlivened by the chase, Staelburg and his friend William, regardless of dangers from numerous precipices, quagmires, &c., dashed on. The agile barb of the former seemed to know of no fatigue, and to be fully inspired by its master's ardour. The stag was indeed a noble beast, and a spirited chase did he lead across a close country, with but few checks; and the object of pursuit, as well as the hounds, were by no means as fresh as in the early part of the day. Still the danger of the one and the spirit of the other prevented any great diminution of the sport. Many of the hunters had parted company with their horses, and some of the latter were disabled, from injuries received from falls. Staelburg, whose nag, in addition to other good qualities, was a very neat fencer, preserved his position, closely followed by William and the two attendants, who were also well mounted. A few of the unknown sportsmen kept at no great distance in their rear.

"William," said Staelburg to his bosom friend, "what is your opinion of our companions? They appear to regard our movements with some attention; and do you not mark their whispers when they approach each other? Think you they meditate aught of ill against us?"

"I know not, Staelburg," replied the other. "But I should think this was too deep a game to be played by Ruffo; and no one else but his patrons, the Würmers, could wish you any ill. We had better look to our weapons."

So saying, William took every precaution necessary for the utility of his arms. Staelburg and the two attendants also assured themselves that all was right. While thus engaged, one of the party before mentioned, urging his horse violently forwards, succeeded in passing them, gazing intently on Staelburg; and the latter thought he could recognise in his countenance some resemblance to one of his assailants on the previous night. He also saw, or fancied he saw, the stranger fix his eyes attentively on the silver

whistle which he wore. These reflections were reserved to himself; for the mind of William was too much occupied with the danger by which Staelburg was threatened by the offended Baron of Hardfels, to pay much heed to anything else.

"My dear Staelburg," said he, "let me ask you what answer you will make to my father to-morrow respecting your love to Bertha?"

"I again repeat, William," replied Staelburg, rather curtly, "I will not yield up my claim to Bertha's hand, unless she herself wish it; and no earthly power shall compel me so to do."

"Then," replied William, his sympathy for his friend preventing him noticing the tone of the last speech, "Bertha will never require you so to act. Her constancy is equal to your own. Yet still I grieve for the effects of my father's anger on you both. You know he is not accustomed to be thwarted, and you are well aware of his inflexibility."

"Too true—too true, William!" replied the other. "But see, the stag is almost overcome; hasten, or he may disable some of the dogs."

They put their horses to the top of their speed, and soon reached the spot where the stag stood at bay, and endeavoured to prolong his career by destroying his pertinacious assailants. One stroke from Staelburg's dagger put an end to his existence; and his horn sounded the death-mote of the noble animal.

The strangers, who had kept almost close to each other, with the exception of a slight dispersion of their body, practised, no doubt, for premeditated reasons, now rode up, and in a scientific manner began to inclose Staelburg and his three companions. Their motive, before conjectured, was quickly discovered; and a moment served to put the little band in a posture of defence. The foremost of the gang, who seemed to possess some authority over the rest, thinking any further deception unnecessary, advanced a little from his associates, and offered to spare the lives of the others, provided the Count of Staelburg were delivered into his hands. An indignant negative from William testified his abhorrence of such a treacherous proceeding. Nothing disconcerted by this answer, the ruffian, in whom the reader may

recognise the lieutenant of Ruffo's band, proceeded to describe, in ready terms, the utter fruitlessness of resistance, and the advantages which would ensue from the adoption of his plan. Staelburg, observing the jeopardy to which his companions might be exposed from a rejection of the bravo's offer, with generosity worthy of a Regulus, counselled his friend (in the French language) if he mistrusted their ability to defend themselves, not to hesitate a moment in complying with the demands they had heard. On the other hand, although not wishing to influence their opinions, he remarked, if they determined to try the force of arms, he would fight for himself and for them while aught of life remained.

"Gallant Staelburg!" exclaimed William, in a tone of the highest admiration, "such an offer well becomes you; but to accept it would stamp my name with an eternal blot. You know my career in arms is now beginning; and I trust my first exploit may be something nobler than to deliver my dearest friend to the dagger of the assassin. No; I prefer death to such infamy!"

It is said that no man is a hero to his valet; but both Fritz and Karl had too good an opinion of their lords to consider them less than heroes. They were, therefore, quite ready to hazard all in their cause.

"Decide quickly, young man!" exclaimed Ruffo's lieutenant, in no very gentle tone.

"Hear my decision, then, wretch!" exclaimed William: "I scorn to accept any such terms. If I fall, I die in a just cause."

Rapidly whirling his sword over his head, William, ably seconded by his companions, prepared to cut his way through his opponents. The deep voice of the first speaker was heard above the clatter of the steel, exclaiming, "Hair-brained youths, submit! I have sworn to take him; nor will I be baulked."

Staelburg, who had been anxiously watching an opportunity, now produced his whistle, and blew three shrill notes. The bandits, who seemed perfectly aware of the consequences which would ensue, eagerly beset the small party, and many lusty blows were dealt on either side. The robbers, although superior in numbers, failed to destroy the little band, or, what they more ardently desired to capture, the young Count. Staelburg was actively

engaged with three brigands (on one of whom he had bestowed "a goodly wound," as a token of affection), who seemed bent on pulling him from his horse, when a savage yell of triumph broke in upon his ears. Suddenly extricating himself from his immediate assailants, our hero beheld his faithful Fritz weltering in his blood. Madly rushing in that direction, he dealt at the author of his death one avenging stroke: the ruffian, cleft to the skull, fell from his horse. When matters come to the worst, they begin to amend; and a momentary glance around assured Staelburg that assistance was at hand. But he was sorely disappointed to find that the approaching band, some twelve in number, belonged to the mercenary Ruffo. Although his hope of succour was vain, this did not diminish his exertions; on the contrary, despair inspired him with fresh ardour, and his efforts to free himself and his companions from their enemies were almost supernatural. The ruffians, pleased at the prospect of speedy assistance, fought with great vigour, and in all probability the affray would have had a speedy termination, had not an unexpected event occurred. While Staelburg was gallantly facing two opponents, a bullet from a musketoon whistled close by his ear, and pierced the brain of one miscreant, who was endeavouring to deal a blow behind. A sudden gleam of hope flashed across the minds of the beleaguered, as they heard the terror inspiring war-shout of Albert the brigand.

"Now, our Lady be praised!" exclaimed our hero to William. "Here comes Albert! We are saved!"

"Not yet, young man," replied Ruffo's deputy, as he dealt at Staelburg a blow which would have unquestionably proved fatal, had it not been dexterously warded; while the return stroke, glancing upon the ruffian's blade, nearly severed the neck of his steed. The other assailants, perceiving the reinforcements Albert was bringing against them, made an orderly retreat, under cover of the advancing body of their companions. Staelburg and his comrades turned from the spot where each had been engaged to the place where lay poor Fritz, in a swoon from loss of blood. Each dismounted, and endeavoured to restore the sufferer to consciousness; but the extent of the wound admitted of no hope

of recovery. While employed at this charitable office, they were startled by the appearance of Albert, who brought a supply of water to bathe his temples.

"Poor fellow!" exclaimed the outlaw, with that kindness of heart which familiarity with scenes of bloodshed had failed to extinguish. "His time on earth will be short; but undo his vest, and give him more air."

Albert's advice was beneficial, and a heavy sigh showed that the wounded man still lived.

"My faithful Fritz!" said Staelburg; "I sincerely trust your zeal for me will not prove fatal to yourself. Medical assistance will soon arrive, and inform me better of your injury."

"Oh, my lord!" said Fritz, in a weak voice, striving to conceal his agony from his affectionate master, "do not concern yourself on my account. I assure you I do not feel the pain which my appearance may lead you to suppose."

"Drink some of this—it will revive you," said Albert, passing him the brandy-flask, which was of great service to him in the multitudinous enterprises in which his adventurous spirit prompted him to engage. The wounded man accepted the proffered flask, and partook moderately of its contents; after which he appeared slightly revived. Albert next, with the assistance of his followers, constructed a litter, on which Fritz was placed, and conveyed to Staelburg Castle. William, leaving the hounds and deer, which the good training of the former had prevented them from mangling, to the care of one of the attendants, who had since come up, rode with the utmost despatch to procure the assistance of Father Clement and Master Herr Haust, who had been prevailed upon to remain in quietness within. Both lost not a moment, but, having provided themselves with Missal, Breviary, and instruments, hastened to their destination.

Herr Haust's skill, unfortunately, was of no avail. But the good monk received the confession, and did all that lay in his power to soothe the conscience of the dying man, after the rites of the Romish Church, which was the creed of the penitent. Poor Fritz did not long survive the administration of the Romish sacrament of extreme unction; and after witnessing his last

breath, the priest and surgeon retired from the scene of death, leaving our hero to regret the loss of as devoted an adherent as any Æneas could have wished. Soon after their departure, Staelburg discovered, to his surprise, that his trusty companion, the whistle which Albert had given him, was missing. He thus ascertained the motives of the ruffians in bringing him to such close quarters; and late as was the hour, he quitted the bedroom in which lay the corpse of the gallant but unfortunate Fritz, and informed William of Hardfels, who was on the point of starting, of his loss. It was resolved to summon his domestics and retainers, and to proceed to revenge the misfortune they had sustained, and recover, if possible, the missing treasure. The small party was quickly armed; and Staelburg, with the few mounted members of his troop, proceeded to the scene of strife, accompanied by William, leaving Karl to bring up the rear. After some hard riding, Staelburg reached his goal. There lay the corpses of the slain; but no other sign could be discovered of the hostile party. For greater certainty, the troop was divided into companies, each containing about five men, who, after passing the original *locus in quo*, started in different directions in quest of their foes. For some time did the gallant band maintain a most active search through the dense thickets of the vast forest for the banditti who had so recently presumed to attack their lord; but they met with little success.

At length, wearied by their fruitless expedition, the whole cavalcade, now united, prepared to return to the castle whence they set out. But judge their surprise, on approaching the scene of the late encounter, to find that the bodies of the ruffians who had fallen in the fray had been removed. Evidence such as this strongly urged the young Count to resume the pursuit; but, on the entreaties of his retainers, who pleaded the lateness of the hour and the exhausted condition of man and beast, he reluctantly gave up the idea, and accompanied them homewards, having taken leave of William, and promised to make known his decision to the Baron of Hardfels at his castle on the following day.

On reaching Staelburg Castle, and having divested himself of his riding gear, Staelburg partook of a moderate repast; after

which, reclining in his chair before the ample fire which the good Kaisa had prepared in the oak chamber, he yielded to his bitter thoughts, and fell into a profound revery.

As may be supposed, the recent events which led to the death of Fritz formed a great portion of his thoughts. But, in addition to the loss of his faithful attendant, and the fear that Albert's present might fall into the hands of those who would employ it to the destruction of the donor, and, if possible, the recipient of it (both sufficient causes for gloom), the young Count reflected, with a feeling of poignant sorrow, on the allusion made by the Baron of Hardfels to his probable banishment in the event of his persisting in his refusal to resign the hand of his beloved Bertha. On the one hand, his evil genius was suggesting to him the advantages which would arise from abandoning the object of his affections: he would secure the friendship of the powerful and trustworthy, though stern, Baron of Hardfels; he would spare himself the indignity of an expulsion from his country; and, perhaps, notwithstanding all these proofs of constancy which he was so well capable of evincing, time might efface his remembrance from the thoughts of his betrothed, who might (such, suggested his invisible adviser, was the fickleness of the daughters of Eve) be induced to become the blooming bride of his hated and perfidious rival. On the contrary part, his better spirit represented to him the rewards of integrity in the possession of his adored Bertha, who, in his calmer moments, he could not suspect of any such inconstancy. His vivid fancy then portrayed the future discomfiture of those who so vindictively sought his ruin, and the happy hour in which he might fully convince his intended father-in-law of the purity of his intentions. What pleasure it would afford him to open his eyes to the real character of the Würmers, for whose influence over the naturally upright and honourable mind of the Baron he was utterly at a loss to account! Need we inform the reader of the result of his hurried and excited cogitations? The struggle of such so momentary, and, in fact, involuntary, a conflict between duty seconded by the natural bent of his chivalrous and honourable disposition, and the somewhat questionable dictates of worldly interest, soon

terminated in favour of the former. Raising himself with a violent effort from his seat, he exclaimed, in an absent manner: "No; never shall it be said that a descendant of the illustrious family of Staelburg so far proved unmindful of the example of his forefathers, as to sacrifice true love and honour at the shrine of mammon! Let pride and power combined do their worst; be it mine to prove by my actions the rectitude of my motives, and wherein I shall perceive active courage alone unequal to extricate me from my perilous position, to practise that most rare of qualities—patience. Spirit of my forefathers!" continued the excited young man, raising his eyes, which enthusiasm here brightened to an unwonted degree, towards the pictures of his far-famed ancestors, whose grim features almost seemed, to his over-wrought mind, to relax in sympathy to his woe,—“enable me in some measure to imitate the fortitude which, throughout the vicissitudes of their varied lives, so strongly marked their characters; and let not the finger of scorn be pointed at me as the degenerate offspring of a race of heroes!”

While uttering this rambling soliloquy, the young noble presented an aspect which many a painter or sculptor would have been delighted to transfer to canvas or marble, as that of one of the mythological heroes of ancient Greece. A turn on the terrace adjoining the castle served, in some degree, to calm his excitement; but, although the violence of his emotion was spent, his eye could not rest on the many scenes of events long past which were revealed to him, as the moon, occasionally passing through dark masses of clouds, poured its mild lustre on the beautiful objects around him, without his thought reverting to the fast-approaching time when he must leave this, the fair although reduced, patrimony of his ancestors.

“For what purpose,” thought he, “have I practised the strictest economy consistent with my position in life, in order to redeem those of my father’s possessions which, on my coming of age, were in the hands of his creditors? Alas! with what short-sighted folly have I formed hopes—some few of which, indeed, I have been permitted to realise—respecting the future honours and domains of the Staelburg family! How have I longed for

the happy moment when I might call the broad estates of my unhappy father my own, and when want of means could no longer be urged as an obstacle to my union with Bertha! The fruits of my past labours will, in all probability, serve to enrich the Count of Würmer and his equally rapacious son; and these very halls, decorated by the good taste of its former possessors, and renowned for the princely hospitality practised therein, will be polluted by contact with those impersonifications of avarice and malignity."

Having so far succeeded in getting the mastery over his feelings, Staelburg re-entered the chamber he had recently quitted, and, seizing the implements of writing which lay upon the table, returned to the window commanding a view of the terrace, and gave vent to the emotion of his mind in the following lines:—

"Farewell to the home of my far-renowned sires!

Farewell to the land of the brave and the free!

Farewell to the halls whose remembrance inspires

Thoughts bitter, and yet withal pleasing to me!

Though distant the climes in which I may wander—

Though long, and perhaps ever, my absence may be—

Yet with feelings of love my young spirit will ponder,

Sweet home of my infancy, often on thee.

No more may I look on the thick-wooded height;

No more may I see the swift river so fair:

Alas! the fond visions which once gave delight

Give place to the cold-hearted fiend of despair.

From faithful adherents, dear friends, must I part—

From one who is dearer, far dearer, than all—

From her who reigns paramount in my fond heart,

And who my fair bride I had long hoped to call.

So dark is the prospect; no star sheds its ray

To guide my frail steps through the thick gloom aright:

The brightness, the freshness, and joy of the day

Are changed to the sombre and dread shades of night.

But see yonder moon, which so late was o'erspread

By clouds which a tempest appeared to portend,

Now in majesty gentle shines full overhead,

And serves a bright aspect to nature to lend.

The clouds are dispelled by the power of the wind;
 The storm which so threatened is now passed o'er;
 Far off, in dense mass, are the former combined,
 And there shall the latter its vengeance outpour.

E'en thus may it be with my future career;
 The danger I dread may to happiness yield:
 Then why should my mind be o'ercome by weak fear,
 Since love is my watchword, and honour my shield?

Content will I bow to the fate which awaits;
 Secure in my innocence, firm is my trust;
 Of my conscience serene I'll obey the dictates,
 For truth will aye triumph—we know that it must.

Misfortunes, though heavy, but shortly can last,
 And joy in the place of deep sorrow shall reign.
 To Bertha united, the thoughts of the past,
 On my bosom enraptured, shall ne'er burst again."

Perhaps our readers may imagine the transition from despair to hope, in our hero's mind, far too sudden to be in accordance with the principles of nature. We can only quote the oft-repeated maxim of one who has had abundant insight into the workings of the human heart—Napoleon: "There is but one stage from the sublime to the ridiculous;" and if, in a particular instance, this rule holds good, why may it not be extended to a general principle? An old writer quaintly alludes to the little difference existing between extremes, in the example of the twin cities of London and Westminster, which,—though apparently so far distant to a traveller starting from London on a tour round the world, so as to make the latter city the last object of his visit,—are, to a person travelling in an opposite direction, so immediately united. But to our subject.

Summoning the attendant who had undertaken to supply the office of valet, vacant by the death of poor Fritz, Staelburg retired to his apartment, having first entered the room in which the remains of the murdered domestic were lying, and kissed the cold lips of the corpse.

CHAPTER IX.

The Exile.

WHEN Staelburg arose, he was in a much calmer frame of mind, and prepared himself to hear with dignity the doom which he knew, from the unchangeable resolution of Hardfels, was inevitable. Noticing some alteration in her young lord's manner, for which she thought the death of Fritz could hardly account, Kaisa urged him to divulge the secret that pressed so heavily on his mind. As nothing could be gained by a further show of mystery, Staelburg gratified her curiosity, and, to her extreme horror, imparted to her the danger of his position. To appeal without delay to the Margrave, and if redress could not be obtained from him, to carry his suit even before the Emperor himself, was Kaisa's suggestion; but this she soon withdrew, on the young Count representing to her that, in all probability, the justice of his appeal would be defeated by the subtle diplomacy of the Baron of Hardfels, who would not fail to urge a plausible plea for obtaining his banishment. At any rate, a prudent compliance might moderate the Baron's resentment, while an obstinate resistance would provoke retaliation. Seeing the futility of counselling opposition to the mandate of the Margrave, with lively grief, Kaisa left the room, to communicate the melancholy intelligence to her fellow-servants. Meanwhile Staelburg mounted his horse, and rode leisurely in the direction of Hardfels Castle, hoping on his way to obtain some tidings of his friend Albert, to whom he might communicate the loss which had befallen him. On his arrival at his destination, the gate was speedily opened, and he was forthwith ushered into an apartment, where he found the chief object of his visit awaiting him. The greetings between them were necessarily short and formal, and the Baron was the first to enter upon the all-engrossing topic of their thoughts.

"I venture to hope, young sir," said he, "that, on calmer reflection, you will admit of my right to dispose of the hand of my daughter in such manner as may be reasonable to myself."

"Assuredly, sir, when the consent of your daughter accompanies the disposition you may be pleased to make. Without such consent, I cannot recognise your right in the degree to which you appear to allude," added Staelburg.

"My daughter has been schooled with a stricter regard to parental duty than to remain long in disobedience to my injunctions, notwithstanding her present romantic attachment to you. Doubtless, when she perceives that I am prepared to enforce, as well as enjoin, submission to my wishes, her sense of right will prevail over any such temporary passion; and she will then receive the Baron of Würmer's addresses in a proper and becoming spirit."

"Excuse my freedom, sir, in suggesting that perchance you would fall into a deeper error by enforcing, than she by refusing, obedience to your wishes. Can you," continued he, in a serious tone, "so lightly treat the affections of your daughter as to speak of them as only a temporary and romantic attachment? No, Baron of Hardfels; I will never believe your noble nature has been so tainted with the spirit of court-intrigue as to prefer your own interest, or even your will, to the happiness of a daughter, which I know is ever paramount in your thoughts."

In the place of the violent indignation which this was calculated to produce from the haughty Baron, a deep sigh burst from him, and his manly and muscular frame trembled with the depth of his emotion. Recovering himself with a strong effort, he replied, in a tone of assumed carelessness:

"You have spoken much of truth, young man, not un-mixed with boyish extravagance. But, in consideration of the circumstances of the case, I pardon your freedom. When you have attained my age, you will know better how to respect a father's feelings. Enough of this trifling. I await your answer to the statement I lately made to you. I cannot but hope you are prepared to acquiesce in my views; in which case," continued the Baron, with more of kindness in his tone than was his wont, "let me assure you, that amongst the numerous circle of friends you are so fortunate as to possess, you will find none truer or more devoted to your interests than myself!"

"I thank you, Baron of Hardfels, for the kind remarks you have been pleased to make as to your conduct towards me in the event of my acquiescence in your wishes. I have given the matter the full consideration its importance deserves; but I am at a loss to find any justification for such unknightly behaviour as to basely give up all hopes of one so high-minded and pure as the lady Bertha, who, I am happy to find, still regards me with feelings far removed from indifference; especially when the inducement to such conduct would be the unworthy motives of personal interest. To bring this most heart-breaking interview to a close, permit me to inform you, that whatever may be the consequences, my resolution is never to withdraw my addresses until they become offensive to the object of them. What, indeed, could serve more strongly to corroborate your unfounded assertion, that the main end of my ingratiating myself with your daughter was the possession of her father's gold, than a surrender of my pretensions, when the influence, if not the gold, of the father would be the consideration of such surrender? Baron of Hardfels, you have my decision."

With a desperate effort to retain his composure, which, adept as he was in the art of self-control, he could scarcely accomplish, Hardfels replied:

"For your own sake, Staelburg, I greatly regret the determination you have come to. I had fondly hoped your good sense would have prevailed over such sentimental ideas. But nevertheless, as you appear resolved, and, as it now seems, sincere in your unhappy passion, my duty, both towards my daughter and yourself, seems clear. With a view to prove to you that I am actuated by no revengeful feelings, I will make a final appeal to you. Here," said he, producing two rolls of parchment, "are documents for your choice: the one secures to you many a broad acre on terms at once honourable and simple; the other consigns you to an ignominious exile from your native land. I cannot conceal the joy with which your choice of the former would inspire me."

Scarcely had he concluded these words, when his auditor snatched with frantic eagerness from his hand the document

dooming himself to banishment, adding: "Between selfish interest and duty there can be no hesitation. Again I state, my decision is made. I would beg to suggest that your allusion to the ignominy of my self-imposed exile is alike untrue and uncalled for."

So saying, Staelburg commenced a perusal of the document he had chosen with such precipitation. It began with an affectionate address to our well-beloved the Count of Staelburg, and proceeded, after giving utterance to expressions of abhorrence at understanding a nobleman of so distinguished a family consorted with, and aided and abetted, brigands and bravos, to the great detriment and danger of the state, by admonishing him to quit and leave, at the expiration of three days, all and every the territories of the Margrave, during his will and pleasure. A penalty of attainder followed this gentle admonition, in the event of his presuming to disobey the will of his sovereign. The missive was written on parchment by a skilful penman, and bore the privy-seal of the Margrave, with the signature of Hardfels, as secretary of state, appended.

"You now know your fate, Count of Staelburg," said the Baron of Hardfels. "There is but one subject more on which I wish to speak. You are probably aware that a loss of estates, temporary at least, is, in many instances, the consequence of banishment: in your case, by an obedient compliance with your lord's commands, you will escape any such forfeiture. At my personal solicitation, the Margrave was induced to forego any claims he might have against you." Seeing an expression of haughty indignation on his listener's face, he was induced to continue: "If I read your thoughts aright, you are disposed, if not to question my assertion, at any rate to refuse accepting the fruits of my intercession, as coming from a party whose favours you despise. I blame you not. But bear in mind, there are those who would embrace with joy any opportunity of acquiring such an addition to their property as your domains. Furthermore, the time may come when you will acknowledge that, acting as I have, I have neither lost sight of your interests nor those of my daughter and myself. Should you at any time feel disposed

to recant your decision of to-day, and undertake, on your knightly word, to associate with those more worthy of your exalted station than Albert the brigand and his lawless confederates, it is not improbable your speedy return to your estates, in the condition in which you left them, may follow. Indeed, I might persuade the Margrave to dispense with this last condition.

"You have rightly divined what was passing in my mind, sir," responded Staelburg. "Although I had hoped to have been possessed of more self-control than to suffer my inward thoughts to be so easily discovered, I will frankly confess to you, my first intention was to accept of no such favour; but, on calmer reflection, I will become the subject of your bounty, with as much of thankfulness as my wretched condition will admit of. I fully agree with you in your suggestion, that my small patrimony would find many applicants at the hands of my lord the Margrave, in the event of its confiscation; the first of which, without doubt, would be my worthy friend the Baron of Würmer, to whom I am, in all probability, indebted for my present state, and of whom, let me add that I consider the company of the high-minded Albert, whom some call brigand, infinitely preferable to that of such a man. Permit me, however, to suggest that, if I understand rightly, confiscation of the property of the meanest member of the state, in a country possessing a free constitution like Baden, depends not upon the Margrave alone, but upon the voice of the states to whom, perchance, the power of banishment belongs. It is neither my interest nor my intention to argue these points with one more conversant with law than myself; and as kindness evidently prompted you in your conduct, I will not cavil at it. You speak of the time arriving when I shall fully acknowledge the propriety of your present conduct. This certainly seems improbable; but I am disposed to give you credit for having acted fully in accordance with your own views of your duty, in this instance, mistaken though those views may be. I leave what little property belongs to me, with the greatest confidence, in your hands; for, stern and unrelenting though you may be, I know you to be altogether incapable of falsehood. Excuse the boldness with which I am addressing you.

He turned to the Baron, but found, to his great surprise, that the skilful politician and inflexible man, who was supposed to possess nerves of iron, was struggling vainly to stifle the emotion which his words had produced. Scarcely, however, had a minute elapsed when, rising with dignity from the seat near the rich arras, which he had chosen the better to conceal the depths of his feeling, the Baron answered, with a voice which to an unpractised ear would betray no traces of violent agitation : " The object of our interview being thus attained, let us not farther protract a conference which appears productive of pain to both of us."

Extending his hand to the young Count, as he prepared to leave the apartment, he added : " We part not in anger."

Observing his intention of departing, Staelburg, in a faltering voice, ventured to inquire, as he clasped his proffered hand, whether it was his intention to deny him the mournful gratification of taking a last farewell of his daughter ?

The Baron hesitated for some moments, and seemed much inclined to refuse his request ; but ultimately answered :

" In the present state of Bertha's health, I am apprehensive that such an interview would be productive of dangerous consequences ; but, lest you should imagine I had behaved with unnecessary harshness towards you, I am willing to grant your request,—especially as it will be the last time you will see my daughter ere she become the wife of Würmer. For all our sakes, I need scarcely caution you of the necessity of composure on your part. I go to prepare her for your interview, although I fear that but little good, and much harm, may be the result of it. Karl," said he, turning to the page, whom he had previously summoned, " will conduct you to her presence after the lapse of five minutes."

So saying he left the room, leaving the young Count to dwell with the bitterness peculiar to a young spirit on his last remarks.

CHAPTER X.

Farewell Greetings.

At the appointed time, Karl, who had hitherto remained a silent, though not an unmoved, spectator of Staelburg's grief, announced to him that the lady Bertha awaited him.

Following his guidance up a long flight of stairs from the hall, Staelburg found his way, through a somewhat tortuous passage, to the apartment indicated to him by Karl. On his demanding admittance, the door was opened to him by the Baron, who, with becoming good taste, left the young Count to take his long adieu of the object of his affections in private.

Remembering Hardfels' last injunctions, with as much calmness as he could summon to his aid, the young man, raising the delicate hand of his fair mistress to his lips, inquired kindly if she had fully recovered from her last indisposition.

Notwithstanding her sunken eyes, and the hectic flush which pervaded her cheek,—as well as such terms could be applied to the fair sex,—gave the lie to her words, Bertha did not fail to inform him that she was in the enjoyment of perfect health,—a statement which, we will do Staelburg's penetration the credit to admit, he very much doubted.

A long pause ensued, each being too full with his and her own thoughts to intrude upon those of the other. In addition to this, Staelburg dreaded the effect every word might have upon the fragile being before him. Had he, however, better known the character of her he was addressing, he might have spared himself the latter cause for silence. With all due deference to those who hold extreme views of the rights of women, we would suggest that, in all cases requiring active opposition to evil, the mind of man, bold and courageous when fully aroused to the importance of the object before it, acquits itself to advantage; but when the time for opposition is past, and submission becomes the duty to be practised, who will then deny that the female mind does not particularly excel in dignified endurance,—an endurance, indeed,

as far removed from fanaticism on the one hand as apathy on the other? Assuming this to be the case with the fair sex generally, it was particularly such with our heroine. Of a gentle and winning nature, she was far more fitted to gain affection by patience in adversity, than to command admiration by the possession of those masculine virtues which custom imperatively requires of every heroine of romance.

The conversation was at length resumed by Bertha, who, having pity on the despondent condition of her lover, sought to animate him to a more hopeful frame of mind. With this view, and with admirable self-possession, she observed that her father had informed her that he was then on the point of taking a long farewell of them.

Rousing himself from the stupor which had oppressed him, Staelburg replied :

“ In part, my dear Bertha, you have been rightly informed. But I presume you have not forgotten your father’s discourse only two days since ; and you will not be surprised if I inform you that my absence from those I love may in all probability be eternal. You cannot, therefore, be ignorant of the causes which lead to my quitting my native country, and all those that are dear to me therein.”

The Baron had endeavoured to calm his daughter’s excitement by suggesting that the young Count was only about to pay a visit for a few months to his friends at Leipsic, and that he might defer the execution of his threat against him at least till after his return. Thus—though harbouring some doubts of the truth of his tale, Bertha was willing to believe her father would not deceive her—the anguish of her soul, on hearing in so abrupt a manner the facts of the case, may be far better imagined than described. Nevertheless, her composure forsook her not. No swoon brought on a happy unconsciousness. She therefore replied :

“ If I understand you aright, your departure from Baden is not voluntary, as I at first supposed. I fear, also, you would suggest that I am the chief cause of it.”

Finding the self-control which Bertha had hitherto maintained

failed not, Staelburg, though greatly annoyed with himself for having made so sudden a disclosure, was induced to bring matters to a conclusion, by remarking :

“Your conjectures are not without reason. I am, at present, under sentence of banishment, and the object of this interview is to take a long (here he paused and gasped for breath), a last farewell of you. My exile, however, will be considerably cheered if I may have the happiness of knowing that I possess your word, on which I place implicit reliance, that no change of circumstances shall efface the remembrance of me from your mind, and induce the addresses of the perfidious Würmer to receive that favour on which I have so greatly prided myself. Do not let me take advantage of your generous and unsuspecting disposition, to prevail upon you to pledge yourself to a course of conduct from which misfortunes and difficulties will arise. Ponder well on the power of your father and Würmer, ere you give a promise which I consider almost as sacred as the solemn vow at the altar; and then let me know whether the poor outcast, or the prosperous Würmer, will be the favoured one during my absence. I blame you not if you decide on the latter alternative.”

“Mention not the name of Würmer in my presence!” said Bertha, with enthusiasm, her brow glowing and her fine blue eyes dilated with the excitement of the moment. “With regard to your generous offer of relieving me from my engagement, to be frank with you, — although I fear I am overstepping the bounds of maidenly reserve, — I certainly cannot decide on such a course without your willing sanction, much as I regret the consequences to which your unhappy attachment to me is leading you. I could counsel you,” continued she, with affectionate earnestness, “by all possible arguments to make your peace with my father; retain possession of your ancestral home; and cease to think of one who indeed returns your love but too truly. I fear not to find some means of escaping the hateful suit of Würmer.”

“Thanks, Bertha! a thousand thanks! Your constancy will not go unrequited. Wherever the scene of my wanderings may be, your image will be ever present with me. In prosperity, — if in your absence any such may attend me, — my successes shall be

dedicated to you ; and when fortune frowns on me, I shall learn from you to despise her threats."

"How often have words similar to those been uttered by cavaliers who have afterwards bitterly regretted them. The beauties of other lands, to whom your knightly prowess will recommend you, may induce even you, my Staelburg, to think but little of the simple being for whom you now possess so deep an affection. Nevertheless, I am not sufficiently versed in the ways of the world, to which my father so frequently alludes, to entertain any suspicion of you."

"Sooner should the tidings of my death reach you, than the faintest rumour of any such inconstancy," replied Staelburg, with devotion.

"There is but one more fact which I wish to ascertain," said Bertha, still preserving her fortitude, "ere this melancholy scene be closed. To what part of the world do you direct your steps?"

"Amidst the painful excitement of the present, I have been unable to direct my thoughts with sufficient steadiness to the future to form any opinion ; but wherever battles and sieges abound, thither shall the exile seek death or renown."

"If for your own sake you would court the former, remember, oh ! remember, that there is one for whom you should strive to live," said his betrothed.

"I have a sad consolation in the reflection that one still remains to take a kind interest in my welfare. But surely even she would prefer to hear of my death, rather than of my dishonour?"

"Such might be the case. But my father will grudge us the satisfaction of a further minute of each other's society. Let us, therefore, prepare to terminate our interview. Adieu !" said she, in a trembling voice, as, turning away her head that a sight of her emotions might not unman him, she took his burning hand in hers.

"Stay," said her lover, remarking her intention of dismissing him : "will you not, before we part, bestow upon me some little token of affection—not by way of remembrance, for there needs no such—to make my Bertha present to my thoughts ?" As he spoke,

he detached from his attire an elegant and valuable brooch. "Wilt you do me the honour of accepting this little offering on my part?"

"I accept of your beautiful gift with thankfulness; and, in return, you will permit me to present you with a trifling ornament containing a lock of my hair," answered she, tendering him, with a trembling hand, a locket, which he fervently pressed to his lips; and then taking a fond embrace of its fair donor, with a heart full to bursting, he left Bertha's apartment.

He spoke truly who said:

"No mind can judge, no tongue can tell,
The anguish of that word, 'farewell!'"

However strictly the mind may be trained in the severest school of the stoics—however proudly the spirit may attempt, by a false show of composure, to deceive others, and perhaps itself,—there are times when nature again resumes its sway in the human breast, and the most obstinate votary of philosophy must bow to its dictates. Of such times the present was a trying instance; and although Staelburg had sought, by severe discipline, to rise superior to such soft emotions, his resolute spirit failed him, and if he did not give vent to his overwrought feelings in a violent fit of weeping, as a disappointed child might be supposed to do, could his soul have been open to observation, we doubt which would have displayed the most stoicism, the child or the man. Nevertheless, "therein do men from children nothing differ," says Shakespeare. "Men are but children of a larger growth," remarks Young, on the same subject.

On reaching the hall, Staelburg was again met by the Baron and his son William, the latter of whom, with great delicacy of sentiment, forebore to intrude upon his thoughts by addressing him, and wrung his hand in silence.

"Your absence has been rather a long one," said the Baron, with a repulsive dryness of tone which jarred painfully on the sensitive ear of the young Count. "I trust, however, my daughter was enabled to go through the ceremony with fortitude and decency—without having recourse to those attacks of fainting, in which

sentimental young ladies so frequently indulge. Poor girl!" he continued, in a low voice, inaudible to Staelburg, "it must indeed be a sore trial to her, to bid an eternal adieu to the first object of her heart's affection—a trial in which one unused to afflictions similar can never fully sympathise—so young, too, to undergo so much!"

Staelburg, shocked with the levity contained in his early remarks, curtly informed him that the lady Bertha had conducted herself with the most exemplary self-composure.

As he accompanied his son and Staelburg to the portal of his mansion, the Baron, in a tone more sympathetic, and in accordance with the feelings of the young Count, observed: "You will bear in mind that, unless you prefer any arrangement to the contrary, either myself or son will take upon us the management of your property; and you may rely upon our using every exertion to improve it to the best of our knowledge; so that when your ardent frame of mind has undergone a cooling process, you may find your affairs none the worse for your absence. I may also inform you that any draft you may think proper to draw on me will be readily honoured by the leading merchants to whom I am known, wherever you may be, and to any amount. Let me counsel you, however, to reveal to none your destination, when you leave Baden, lest your steps should be tracked by those whose company you like not."

Staelburg, who was quite at a loss to account for the occasional outbursts of real feeling and kindness which contrasted so strangely with some of the remarks and acts of the Baron, hastened to assure him that he left all his possessions with the utmost confidence in the hands of a man of such undoubted integrity, and moreover of such unexampled ability. He expressed also his warm thanks for the Baron's kind offer of becoming banker to him in his wanderings.

By this time the two had reached the gate of the castle, where our hero's steed was awaiting him.

"Fare thee well, misguided young man!" was the last speech of Hardfels. "Harsh and unjustifiable though my behaviour may seem at present, I repeat it, the time may come, though in all

probability my eyes will be closed in death ere its arrival, in which you will confess that, as far as your headstrong impetuosity will permit, and making all due allowance for a parent's feelings, I have sought, as far as my fallible judgment will allow me, to promote your real good. Much as I regret the consequences of it, I cannot withhold my tribute of admiration of your constancy, which is indeed worthy of a better cause."

"If such could be found," was the reply of the young Count. "For my part, I honour the desire to do right by which you are actuated, although I deeply regret that so honourable a motive should urge you to the course you are now pursuing. Fare thee well, sir! May Heaven pardon you wherein you have acted wrongly, and richly reward whatever good may lurk behind a scheme which certainly presents so forbidding an exterior!"

A leave-taking, of as cordial a nature as the respective positions of the parties warranted, ensued; after which the Baron, overcome by the part he had taken in the foregoing scene, and muttering between his firmly clenched teeth, "Perverse and yet admirable young man! with what obstinacy didst thou oppose thyself to my benevolent designs!"—laid hold of the arm of Karl for support; and, having declined William's offers of assistance, slowly betook himself to the interior of his abode.

After his departure, William walked by the side of his friend for a short distance; and the following conversation took place, in which William of Hardfels was the first speaker.

"On my return from a ride in the neighbourhood, I understood you were engaged in a close consultation with my father. I trust nothing passed between you which could render you more depressed than the subject of your interview would of necessity warrant. But I have no desire to intrude upon your confidence."

"By no means, my dear William. I confess to you that, throughout the whole transaction, your father's conduct, compounded as it is of such sudden harshness and such unexpected kindness, forms a most inexplicable enigma to me. Can it be that, in so peculiar a manner, he hopes to confer a benefit on me? He certainly alluded to some such thing. And I am well aware, not only of his inability to stoop to falsehood, but also of the vigour

and ability of his mind, and the extent of his power. It is by no means unlikely that, in his own bosom, he considers himself as having chosen for me the least of I know not what, or how many, evils. On one point, I regret to find, he appears inflexible, namely, in his resolution of wedding Bertha to the Baron of Würmer, with or without her own consent. I suppose that his most intimate friend could not call to récollection an occasion in which the calm and collected Baron of Hardfels had so far lost his self-command as in the present instance. Notwithstanding I was so fully occupied with the bitter thoughts which were passing over my own spirit, I could not but pity his evident agitation."

"You are right, Staelburg. My father's conduct is indeed a mystery: never have I known him led into such a deep betrayal of feeling as when he bade you farewell at the gate. I cannot but think that my suspicions; of Würmer possessing some unaccountable but irresistible influence over him, must be correct. To be more explicit with you, my own opinion is that, had it not been for some exercise of this influence, the events of to-day would never have taken place; but that it would have been his fondest desire to have promoted the union of two beings in whose interest he takes so deep a concern as yourself and Bertha. It is not improbable that the result is the only part of the matter which Würmer has planned, and that the means of accomplishing that result (I, of course, speak of Würmer's marriage with my sister) are left to the sagacious management of my father, who has, no doubt, taken those steps which he considers most advisable.—But stay," he continued, in a lower voice; "do you not see an object lurking among yonder trees? Let our discourse be in a lower tone."

A vigilant search was made by both for the object which had attracted William's attention; but be it who it may, something resembling a human figure was seen to glide stealthily through the thick underwood in the direction of Würmer's residence, and was soon lost from their sight among the ferns.

"Is Michael, lately your father's page, still in his service? I thought I understood it was the Baron's intention to dismiss him?" said Staelburg.

"I see, your suspicions are akin to my own," answered William. "I do not know whether I informed you of the whole facts of the case, which were, that being discovered in the act of playing the spy on your last visit to my father, and, moreover, having ultimately confessed he was acting in the capacity of confidential agent of the Würmers, my father was induced to return him to the quarter whence he came. You are, probably, aware that he was formerly one of the old Count's attendants."

"Nevertheless, be our unwelcome visitor who he may, we have now got rid of his company, and may therefore resume the thread of our discourse. Did you see either of the worthy pair here yesterday? or, rather, do you know of their having been here in your absence?"

"I have made strict inquiries as to all that passed during my absence; and the result of my inquiries is, that neither father nor son were here yesterday: indeed, I have understood that the latter was seen travelling alone on the road which leads to Mentz. I presume, therefore, we shall see no more of him, for the present. My father also informed me that he had not acquainted Würmer with his arrangements."

"So far, so good. I did not wish for either to know the circumstances attending my departure until after that departure should have taken place. At present, I know not what to consider as my destination; but, from what I hear, I should think the state of affairs in the Low Countries promised ample employment for any number of cavaliers. If such be the case, there is every probability of my accepting an appointment in the army of the insurgents."

"So good a lance as yourself would, without doubt, be eagerly engaged by those who have such need of assistance as these insurgents. I was lately conversing with my father on the subject of their prospects; but, from what he informs me, the Hollanders, though not deficient in courage or perseverance, are not sufficiently acquainted either with the use of arms or military tactics to prevail over the well-equipped cavalry of Spain. You know the ill success which attended the commencement of the revolution. But permit me, my good friend, to inquire whether your

purse is sufficiently well stored to meet the heavy demands to which your journey and outfit will subject you? if not, do not hesitate to accept the contents of my own."

"I thank you for your kind offer, my dear William!" said Staelburg; "but I am happy to say that, for the present, I am well supplied; and in future, when practicable, I intend to pursue the course your father was so good as to suggest. I presume there will be no objection on his part to our occasionally maintaining a correspondence—as far, at least, as the uncertainty of my movements and the defective means of communication will permit?"

"I regret to say, that, on my venturing to hint the matter to my father, he promptly stated that no letter from you, addressed either to myself or sister, would be permitted to enter his gates. He also strictly forbade either of us to hold any communication with you. I was, however, thinking, that as our mutual friend Albert is frequently in the habit of taking long journeys to distant parts, it is not unlikely that in some of his rambles he might make acquaintance with you, and thus be the means of keeping up a verbal intercourse between us."

"The idea is a good one," said Staelburg. "I was about to inquire if you knew aught of his whereabouts, in order that I might inform him of the unfortunate loss of his present, lest it should be used as a decoy, by the unprincipled Ruffo, to lure our gallant friend to destruction."

"I have no doubt that, ere long, I shall meet with him," said William; "and I will not fail to mention the matter; but it is most likely you may see him personally before you depart, which I presume you do not contemplate doing before the expiration of the appointed time."

"On the contrary, it is my intention to set out to-morrow morning, at the farthest. If the state of my affairs would permit of such a course, I should wish to bid farewell to Baden this evening."

"So soon?" said William. "I had hoped at least to have had a day or two to make future arrangement. But perhaps it would be more prudent for you to lose no time in putting some

miles between yourself and Kielsworth, before news of your departure can reach the ears of those who are so deeply interested in your movements. If in anything I can be of the least service to you, do not hesitate to employ me; and, believe me, you may count on my assistance to the best of my power."

" 'A friend in need is a friend indeed,' and such are you to me at present. I fear that the Baron's prohibition will be a bar to my availing myself, to the extent you offer, of your kindness; for which, nevertheless, receive my sincere thanks. But I am taking you some distance from home. The best of friends must part, and the bitterness of parting is in no wise diminished by procrastination; let me, therefore, bid you farewell, and assure you that the remembrance of the many pleasant hours I have passed in your society will never be erased from my mind."

"Farewell, my earliest and dearest friend!" said William, in a voice almost choked by the sobs he was struggling unsuccessfully to suppress.

"Do not give yourself up to despair," said Staelburg, in a tone of assumed cheerfulness. "The time may not be far distant when I may return, none the worse for the scenes I have gone through."

After a fervent grasp of his friend's hand, the Count, whose fortitude was fast giving way, urged his spirited steed to a quicker pace, and was soon lost to the sight of the weeping William.

It may seem strange to an English reader to hear any allusion to tears on the parts of the lords of the creation; but we would beg them to bear in remembrance that all are not Englishmen, and that all do not possess that habitual self-control—for want of feeling we cannot, and will not, call it—which so universally distinguishes our countrymen. Ethnologists, by a comparison of the customs, language, and traditions of the German tribes with those of the Oriental nations, treat the former as of Eastern, probably Greek, origin. Might it not be that the Germans still not only retain the "*os rotundum*," but are possessed of the warm feelings and passions of those seekers after wisdom; while we, the Anglo-Saxon race, by long intercourse with people subject to Roman control and habits, have become almost un-Teutonised

(to use a word which *ignorabat*, Lindley Murray), and resemble in character, though not in institutions, the Roman? The German, therefore, might boast of the imaginative sentimentality of the Demosthenes and Euripides; while the sterner, but no less heroic principles of a Brutus or Scævola, are the characteristics of the modern Anglo-Saxon. But "*ne sutor ultra crepidam*"—what has a humble dealer in fiction to do with abstruse ethnological theories?

Roused by the freshness of the air and the fast motion of his horse, Staelburg regained more of his wonted equanimity; and for the purpose of extending his ride, reined his steed a little out of the direct route between his residence and that he had lately quitted, when, holding his rein with a loose hand, he was soon lost to external objects, in a deep commune with his own thoughts. His abstracted mind was speedily recalled to the ordinary affairs of life by the report of fire-arms in advance. Turning his eyes to the quarter whence the sound proceeded, he perceived a man stagger, as if wounded, to the ground; while, at no great distance behind the wounded man, two or three bravos, whom he soon recognised as Ruffo's cut-throats, were hurrying to extinguish what little life the bullet might have left in their victim.

Although in the distance two men, clad in the garb peculiar to the lawless denizens of the forest, might be seen approaching hastily to the spot, it was very uncertain which side they might join, and without Staelburg's intervention it would have fared but ill with the prostrate stranger. As it was, it required but a very short time to enable Staelburg to put a tolerably correct construction on the facts of the case. In the state of mind in which the young noble then was, a scene of excitement was not only quite in accordance with his tastes, but was also beneficial in rousing him from the moody condition in which he was too prone to indulge. "Our waking dreams," says Young, "are fatal:" a very short time, therefore, elapsed, ere, drawing his rapier, Staelburg placed himself between the advancing brigands and their unconscious victim, in whom he was horrified to recognise a strong resemblance to his good friend Albert. The robbers, seeing that the unexpected succour consisted of but one

man, and he very slightly armed, were strongly disposed to persist in their object, of possessing themselves of the body of their fallen foe. Reflecting, however, that, unless backed by a numerous party in the rear, one man's audacity would scarcely prompt him to oppose their designs, and, moreover, having a very wholesome dread that the foresters in the distance might, if so inclined, cut off their retreat, the marauders hastily retraced their steps.

Our hero, thinking wisely that discretion was the better part of valour, suffered the ruffians to make an unmolested retreat, while he devoted his attention to him who, but for his timely assistance (judging from the character of his assailants), would soon have terminated his career. On raising up the wounded man, who was indeed no other than our friend, Albert emitted a low groan, and attempted to speak, but was, at the moment, unable from weakness to accomplish his purpose.

Fortunately a clear stream flowed at a very short distance from the place, in which, having filled his friend's hunting-horn and bathed his face, he succeeded in restoring him to full consciousness. A draught of the cool water still further revived him; and, in a voice rather the weaker from loss of blood, he was able to give to his deliverer some account of the facts connected with his wound, as well as thank him for his exertions. In a few moments the foresters, to whom we before alluded, and who turned out to be of Albert's band, arrived at the spot where their leader lay; having failed to bring the assailants, in whom they speedily detected their old enemies, to action. It was indeed a moving sight to behold the honest affection of those wild bravos, as they directed their mournful eyes to the pale cheeks of their respected chief. It was long before Staelburg (who had acquired some little skill in leechcraft, from the instructions of good Master Haust, with whom he was a great favourite) could persuade them that Albert's life was in no imminent danger; and when they ultimately suffered themselves to be convinced of the fact, their expressions of gratitude and joy were boundless.

It appeared from Albert's statement, that, in one of his solitary excursions, the sound of the whistle with which he had

presented the young Count, reached his ear. Forgetting all thoughts of personal security, in anxiety for the safety of his friend, Albert was quickly at the place indicated by the sound. In fact, so quickly that the bandits (who had, as Staelburg feared, made use of the instrument as a means of attempting Albert's life) had not time to put their well-planned scheme into execution ere their intended dupe had slain the wretch who held the glittering bauble, and once more became its possessor. No sooner had he seized it, than a ball from the piece of one of the other brigands, who lay in ambush in a place unknown to him, laid poor Albert low in the way we have described. The bullet had taken effect in the fleshy part of the leg; and not having penetrated very deep, was extracted without much difficulty by the extempore surgeon.

Notwithstanding all Staelburg's anxiety to remove the wounded man to his residence, the latter insisted on first examining the pockets of the slain bandit, who appeared to be rather more tastefully attired than the generality of Ruffo's employès. Albert, in a very leisurely style, made a minute inspection of the pouch of the slain man, and thereout removed two or three leaden balls, a mysterious amulet, used as a charm against witchcraft, a large knife, and a few scraps of paper, not of the very best quality, covered for the most part with some very illegible hieroglyphics. One of these, unfortunately for Würmer, contained his agreement with Ruffo, which, in defiance of his patron's wish, he had entrusted to his deputy. Having satisfied himself that nothing further remained, without caring to inspect the documents at that time, Albert suffered himself to be placed on a rough litter, composed of the boughs of trees, and conveyed to the castle of Staelburg; while one of his followers went with all speed to the cottage of Master Haust, to procure his assistance. On an inspection, good Master Haust corroborated his pupil's statement that little danger was to be expected from the wound; and having done all that was needful, recommended Albert to remain in tranquillity at Staelburg Castle until a complete recovery should ensue; to which, on our hero's earnest solicitation, Albert reluctantly consented.

Leaving Albert to the enjoyment of a little rest on a couch—for nothing would induce him to become an inmate of a bed—the young Count devoted part of the little time that remained to him to arranging the funeral obsequies of the ill-fated Fritz. The venerable ecclesiastic, whom we stated to have attended the deceased in his last moments, performed the impressive ceremony in the little chapel adjoining the castle, in the presence of Staelburg and most of the retainers of the family, who testified, by their dejected countenances, the respect in which the departed was held. As the little group left the building, some of the principal domestics and attendants gathered round their beloved master; and each earnestly besought Staelburg to allow him to become his esquire in his wanderings. Although touched by their fidelity, and having no personal objection to the company of either of the devoted men around him, Staelburg, thinking it more prudent to travel incognito, with as little display as possible, was induced to decline their proffered services. The aged steward, who had grown grey in the family, would not be persuaded that his infirmities could be any obstacles to his becoming the personal attendant of his lord. Being informed of the reasons which actuated the young Count, the faithful servant broke out into a passionate invective against all who had any hand in his banishment, of which he had been duly apprised, with considerable embellishments, by the garrulous Kaisa. He dwelt with great eloquence on the disgrace it would entail on the illustrious house of Staelburg, for one of its scions to quit the home of his ancestors unattended; since, as the good steward stated, it was never the custom for any of the lords of Staelburg to set out on an expedition in the company of fewer than four esquires in panoply. The old man was blessed with a very long memory, and proceeded to inform Staelburg how good Sir Rudolph—whose exploits made all Germany ring—when proceeding to pay his respects to the Emperor Charlemagne, took with him as many as fifty well-armed gentlemen, all mounted, at his own expense, on coal-black steeds, with caparisons of the most costly description. He could further inform him of the number and names of the gallant esquires who had attended

Maurice de Staelburg, one of the early lords, when he fought against the infidels under St. Louis of France; and knew the exact expense of each coat of mail worn by the doughty warriors, which, he said, was greatly increased by the pains taken to make their gorgets in an elegant manner. No man should be called upon to go beyond his grandfather; and Staelburg listened with astonishment, not unmixed with incredulity, as he heard of ancestors who, if they lived at all, must have had an antediluvian existence. When Staelburg, not knowing whether to be more amused or offended, interrupted the prolix steward, he was, if we mistake not, on the point of alluding to the number of pages in the train of Adelbert de Staelburg when he became an inmate of Noah's ark. In fact, "*Atavis edite regibus*" did not, according to the old man's opinion, express any part of the glory or antiquity of the Staelburg family. Finding all their remonstrances in vain, the little knot of attendants slowly broke up, each for his respective employment; while our hero wended his way to that part of the castle which was used as an armoury. Everything bore evidence of the care taken by him whose interment he had just attended, of every article of mail suspended in the spacious apartment. Not to weary our readers with too minute a description of the various objects which met the eye of the Count, suffice it to say that there was no lack of Milan Hauberks steel corslets, or any other weapons which the most fastidious cavalier might require, either for offence or defence. Many, indeed, by their hewn and hacked appearance, shewed that their former proprietors (who, the old steward insisted, were the heroes of his tale) had shrunk not from danger. Selecting a light and elegant suit of armour, adapted for the custom of the times and the nature of the service he was about to engage in, Staelburg gave instructions to the new attendant, who took the place of Fritz, to spare no labour to get it ready for speedy use.

Kaisa—who, although possessing rather more talking than reasoning powers, was by no means deficient either in common sense or affection for her master—determined on making a final appeal to him. She inquired, with much energy, whether Staelburg was not of opinion that, on application to his learned

uncle, the latter might find means to annul the whole proceedings taken by the Margrave, and his adviser Hardfels. The idea had before struck the young noble; but he at once assured the good old domestic that most probably the banishment to which he was sentenced, if not strictly in accordance with the principles of the constitution, was of too doubtful a nature to be contested; and that, in the event of the point being decided against him, he could expect nothing less than an immediate confiscation of his possessions at the hands of the incensed Margrave. Wherever the supreme power is inclined to be oppressive, and the representatives of the people are weak and servile, a constitution is but a solemn farce; and until education teaches the one justice, and the other its natural privileges and power, any restraint on absolute authority is at best but incomplete. Many persons ascribe the proverb, "Knowledge is power," to Bacon: although, perhaps, more genuine than authentic, the idea would do no discredit to that great man. Staelburg had good cause to fear an appeal to the States: he well knew that, assuming his ideas of the rights of persons to be correct, it would be an easy task for the Margrave, assisted by Hardfels, to put his own construction on the law, and force his opinions on the other branches of the constitution. In addition to this reason, Staelburg had no wish to render himself more obnoxious than possible to Hardfels, lest the wrath of the potent Baron should exclude his hopes of ultimately accomplishing a union with Bertha.

CHAPTER XI.

The Departure.

AFTER having made all necessary arrangements, fully explained to Kaisa and the steward the terms he had come to with the Baron of Hardfels touching the management of his property, and also having written to communicate the same fact to his uncle,

Staelburg prepared for his departure. He was loth to leave Albert until the latter should have recovered from his wound; but so forcibly did the brigand urge him to lose no time in setting out, that our hero submitted to his arguments; not, however, until he had made every possible provision for his comfort. Albert stated that, as soon as he was restored to perfect health, it was his intention to take a journey to the Low Countries, to procure weapons for his followers, in which, he had no doubt, he should meet with Staelburg, and inform him of what was passing at home. Wishing him a speedy recovery, the young Count summoned his page, with whose assistance he was soon clad in the coat of mail he had selected. His equipments attracted the unqualified admiration of Albert, who declared that he had never seen a cavalier more aptly accoutred proceed to the wars.

Avoiding the direct track from Kielsworth to Mentz, in order that he might not encounter the Baron of Würmer, Staelburg pursued the even tenor of his way, without molestation and without experiencing any adventures of interest until he had quitted the German territories, and was within twenty miles of Leyden, where, he understood, William of Orange, the leader of the Dutch, was then encamped. Here he was overtaken by a personage mounted on a bony piebald mare, a branch of the order mammalia, genus equus, not much in vogue with the majority of the riding world at the period of our tale. The stranger was attired in a style which baffled all attempt on Staelburg's part, to obtain any insight into his condition. An overcoat of a somewhat sombre hue enveloped his figure, which was remarkably slim, and betokened far more of activity than muscular power. Pantaloons, which were once of a fashionable and showy kind (although the aspect they then presented would not impress a spectator with any very high idea of the wearer's dignity) encased his thin, corkscrew-like nether extremities, at the verge of which were shoes of a courtly pattern, of which the toes reached the orthodox length of a foot. A massive buckle of silver was displayed to the best advantage, as the adornment of the aforesaid shoes, and formed an agreeable variation from the tawdry

ribbon with which his pantaloons were tied at the ankle. To complete his tasteful costume, a conical hat, of no ordinary dimensions, ornamented with a handsome peacock's feather, was stuck, *à la* Thersites, on his head; spurs, of the length of some few inches, protruded from his heels, and seemed to annoy both man and beast in such an equal degree, that had good Mr. Martin beheld the pair, he would have been at a loss to name which was most in need of his legislative abilities. A rusty sword extended from the chin of the rider almost to his horse's heels, and was connected with his person in such a manner as to recall to one's mind a ferocious mastiff with a log chained to his neck. Petronels, the locks of which appeared in anything but a serviceable condition, were placed in a posture of defiance in his holsters; and when we further inform the reader that the oddity in question was coughing ready to choke himself from the vapour arising from the then modern luxury of a pipe,* (the bowl of which would, from its size, attract the honourable mention of any Regent Street lounge of the present day), we trust we have given a minute and faithful account of the striking phenomenon which presented itself to the amazed view of our hero.

The new-comer, glad of an opportunity of drawing the before-mentioned pipe from his mouth without compromising his dignity, broke the pause which followed his unexpected entrance on the scene, by inquiring, in a tone of much majesty and pomp, whether the company of a solitary wayfarer would be an intrusion on the reflections of the good knight he was addressing.

Staelburg, judging from the eccentricity of his appearance, imagined the individual he saw before him must be of an unsound mind; and with the view of accommodating himself to an evil which he saw no means of avoiding, answered his unknown com-

* It is difficult to fix with accuracy the time when tobacco was first applied to its present purposes. Its introduction into England is claimed for Sir Walter Raleigh, on his return from Virginia, about the year 1587. The wicked weed seems, however, to have been previously known on the Continent. It was imported to Spain as early as the year 1559; and, although it was first used medicinally, it is probable that, in course of time, its properties were so far developed that, at the period of our tale, persons of gentility and opulence were able to indulge in the costly luxury of a pipe.

panion by assuring him that the society of so well equipped a gentleman would be a source of great pleasure to him, but suggested that the name of his comrade would be an acceptable communication.

"I am none other than Frederick Hophman, a poor student of the University of Tübingen, about to pay a visit to some friends at Leyden, and ascertain the state and condition of my fellow-schoolmen there," said the hitherto unknown, with calm dignity. "Perchance I may be the humble means of revealing some novel and interesting discoveries in the occult science which the vulgar call 'witchcraft.' Permit me to make a trial of my skill on thy illustrious person. I pray thee, give me thine hand, and I will inform thee of many things which have happened to thee, as also of some few things which the stars have made known to me touching thy future fate."

More than ever convinced of the insanity of the unfortunate student, but willing to gratify his humour, Staelburg drew off the gauntlet of his right hand, and laid it open to the inspection of the magician.

After a diligent investigation of the lines and marks on the palm, during which the features of the astrologer underwent some very remarkable changes, while the smoke from his pipe was emitted with tenfold vigour, he spoke as follows, in the Dutch dialect, in which he appeared to be well versed :

"If the stars do not deceive me, I am addressing the Count of Staelburg, a Swabian warrior of no mean renown."

"Indeed!" said the young Count, with some slight amazement; for, although he was no believer in the black art, he was at a loss to comprehend how his companion, whom he never remembered to have seen before, could have obtained the information. "Having made this revelation, proceed, I pray you, to inform me what of my past life you know."

"Peace,—be silent! Thou shalt know all," said the astrologer, with an air of profound mystery. "The cause of my having the pleasure of seeing you here is excess of affection for a certain young lady named Bertha, of Hardfels, in whose good graces you have a powerful rival. You are now leaving your native country

more for the satisfaction of others than yourself. Is it not so?"

"To be candid with you, I will not deny the truth of the information you have imparted; but I will never believe that the knowledge you possess of my affairs, and which may be readily accounted for on natural grounds, can be acquired from palmistry. To speak plainer, Germany is not so large but that one who may be so inclined might make himself acquainted with the persons and affairs of all the nobility. It is not, therefore, unlikely that my visage, or perchance my equipments, might reveal to you the Count of Staelburg, whose history, such as it is, may be known to you."

A grotesque smile came over the other's face as he answered: "Thou hast said right in part, most worshipful sir; but permit me to ask what interest have I, a simple votary of true wisdom, in the names and circumstances of the proud barons of Germany, who (although, as Cicero hath it, '*non est mihi contra auctoritatem senatus dicere*,' and saving thine own most honourable presence), I would suggest are not nearly so useful to the community at large as we penniless schoolmen. '*Cur conviviis exulet philosophia*?' saith the writer; but it is well known that more banquets than philosophy are to be found in the castles of the present day, and that the two are never by any chance combined at their riotous revelries. Thou sayest, good sir, that it is by natural causes I have obtained that insight into your affairs which I communicated to you? Knowest thou not that true science is at all times based on the operations and rules of nature, which the mind of the true philosopher alone is able to comprehend in all its fulness? The knowledge thus derived imparts itself at all seasons, and is never at a loss."

"If such, then, be the case," said our hero, "let me hear what you have to say of the future. I would fain ask you of many things; but, without doubt, your skill enables you to detect the desires of my heart, without my expressing them in words."

"Most true, O worthy sir," said the necromancer, in an ecstasy of admiration at Staelburg's seeming appreciation of his

talents. "I would most earnestly desire to tell thee all things, were it not that ——"

"But does not knowledge impart itself at all seasons? and is it ever at a loss?" said Staelburg. "Methinks, sir astrologer, you are but a sorry adept at so noble an art, to fail in so easy a matter."

"I had hoped," answered the professor of the black art, "that true wisdom had in some measure penetrated thy mind; but I fear prejudice hath the chief place. Then be it known unto thee, that it is fully in my power to impart all the information thou desirest; but thy untutored mind understandeth not the weighty reasons which bind me to silence. Dost thou not know that, in the present aspect of the heavenly bodies, any revelation of the future would be prejudicial to thine interests? Make no further inquiries, then, and take heed that thou provokest not thy destiny."

"But, at least, tell me what produces this sudden change in your manner. Five minutes ago you pleaded no such inability."

"Ignorance again resumes its sway in thy mind," said the soi-disant fortune-teller, with ready tact. "It is of no avail for the most erudite wisdom to combat bigotry such as thine. I will make no further communication to so obstinate a scoffer, after having answered thy remark. Know, then, that at the very instant when I spoke, the skill which thou so wantonly contemnest enabled me to ascertain that a junction was taking place between the signs Leo and Virgo, Saturn being lord of the ascendant; so that so unpropitious a junction, under the malignant planet, would render the information it was my intention to communicate extremely jeopardous to thee. I will, therefore, be a better friend to thee than thou art to thyself, and will maintain silence, even at the risk of incurring thy presumptuous taunts."

Whether the information thus bestowed was correct, or the reverse,—although we rather incline to the latter opinion,—we will not take upon us to decide, but will state that the effect it had upon our hero was to excite a violent fit of laughter, under the influence of which he reeled in his saddle to such an extent, as to expose himself to more danger of a fall from his steed than

the learned astrologer could have dreamed from the unfavourable appearance of the signs and planets.

The advocate for science, notwithstanding the ingenuity he had displayed, did not seem quite at home in the character of expounder of the stars. Instead of bestowing a severe blow upon the despiser of his art with his sword,—if, indeed, it were possible for so small a man to wield so large a weapon,—the student gave vent to a burst of hearty merriment at the ludicrous appearance presented by his companion.

When he had somewhat recovered from this outburst of hilarity, the adept remarked that Staelburg's appearance on horseback was somewhat akin to his own; for as he asserted, in an air vastly different from that in which he had first commenced the intercourse between them, the exterior of a horse was, previous to the present time, a complete *terra incognita* to him.

Laughter certainly acts the part of the telegraph of the heart, and the reciprocation of feeling, such as we have narrated, put both parties on a somewhat easier footing. Staelburg, who could judge with tolerable correctness what occupations Master Hophman did not follow, but was completely in the dark as to his objects in venturing into a country where perils and dangers were so plentiful, returned to the charge, by saying:

"Come, Master Hophman, I think we have arrived at a very good understanding as to the success of your predictions. As the aspect of the heavenly bodies prevents the exercise of your talents, I presume we act in different capacities than necromancer and victim."

The individual thus addressed, seeing that nothing further could be gained by the retention of the character he had adopted, was induced to forego any future amusement to be derived from the innocent trick he had been practising, and added:

"I perceive, my worthy companion, my assumption of the astrologer's part did not meet with the success I had anticipated. I must, therefore, act with more openness; and as, with your permission, I will avail myself of the protection afforded by your company till we reach our common destination, we may as well throw off all reserve. You will mark," he continued, with a

roguish leer, "I have a trusty weapon by my side, and could, no doubt, give a good account of myself in case of an attack ; nevertheless, the proverb says that company is good, even to the gallows, and as I have not the remotest intention of putting my neck in a noose, I can enjoy the pleasures of company without any of its corresponding drawbacks. For, well accoutred for combat as you see me to be, I will confess that the sword of the flesh, as these good Dutch divines call it, is not quite so familiar to my hand as the less destructive instrument the scalpel, by the use of which I trust to get me a livelihood, although perhaps you may consider us mediciners as destructive to human life as the most bloodthirsty warrior of ancient, modern, or even future times. However, if these Hollanders show the obstinacy of resistance which their previous deeds lead us to expect, they will, without doubt, want the attendance of a leech ; so that I may have an opportunity of enriching my coffers without exposing my own valuable life to harm."

Here the talkative disciple of Esculapius, observing the abstracted mood which oppressed his companion, left him to the enjoyment of his reflections, and dropped to the rear, his appearance leading an observer to suppose that the inattention with which the young Count treated his edifying discourse was a subject of much personal annoyance to him. So distasteful did Master Hophman's thoughts appear to him, that it was not long ere he made another essay to draw our hero into conversation, by bantering him on his melancholy. He accordingly began :

"Good sir knight of the dolorous mien, I have read of old that '*post equitem sedet atra cura*;' admitting this to be correct, I fear me that fortune, that fickle arbitress of human destinies, thinking your steed the stronger of the two, has placed the quantity of care, which as a knight I am bound to carry, upon your saddle, or perchance your shoulders. Folly is light; so, I suppose, care, which is a branch of wisdom, must be heavy. If you carry care on a pillion, instead of your mistress, you keep but sorry company : if, indeed you prefer to bear your burden upon your ample shoulders, St. Christopher himself was but a joke to you. In continuation of my classic remarks, I find it written, '*Quis exsul*

patriæ se quoque fugit.' On first intruding my unworthy self on your most honourable notice, I was actuated by the hope of enlarging my scanty stock of learning at the fountain head of your erudition; judge, therefore, my dismay on finding a cavalier, from whom I expected so much, afflicted with so lamentable an attack of taciturnity, as, I fear, not even the skill of Hippocrates would suffice to dispel. I would beg most humbly to suggest that, by confiding some of your sorrows to me, you would find your griefs lessened, since it is a well-known fact that two heads are wiser than one, and, for the same reason, two minds would be stronger than one."

"Your remarks savour of insolence," said Staelburg, in a serious tone. "But as you seem so bent on knowing the circumstances attending my present despondency, I would only refer you to the communications you, in the capacity of astrologer, so lately made known to me, and which, I think, fully justify any depression of spirits on my part."

"By no means!" said his volatile companion. "Without doubt, in a short time, you will again behold the fair lady and country you are now leaving, unless, indeed, you prefer one of the daughters of these gallant Hollanders for your bride, and would be content to renounce the beautiful scenery of Baden for the swamps and fens of this accursed country.* In which case, permit me to tell you, that however I might covet the possession of your steed and armour, your taste would not be one of the articles of which I should deprive you. 'Care killed a cat,' saith the proverb: let me recommend you, by a perusal of the works of Catullus, and a contemplation of the example of Cataline, to avoid so melancholy

* A writer on Holland and its climate applies to the former some lines, attributed to Hudibras, to wit:

"A country that draws forty feet of water,
In which men live, as in the hold of nature;
And when the sea does in upon them break,
And drowns, a province does but spring a leak."

But as this sarcasm, "non est inventus," in Butler's "Hudibras," and both the immortal satirist and his imitators flourished after Master Godfrey's day, we think an abundant excuse has been shown for not putting it in his mouth.

a catastrophe; so that your name may not be in the catalogue of those who have become tenants of the catacombs. I trust, though, that I am no advocate for pusillanimity," continued the punster.

"I believe you are correct in suggesting that care is productive of more evils than benefits," said Staelburg; "and I feel assured that, on beholding preparations for war, martial ardour will free my mind from any unpleasant recollections."

"It may be so with you; but to me the chances of being engaged in actual warfare would bring to my mind thoughts the very reverse of pleasant. Of course, I allude to the melancholy necessity of destroying so many of my fellow-creatures," continued Hophman, vouchsafing a significant grin on the incredulous Staelburg. "For my personal safety I have no fear; if, indeed, any dread of danger should for a moment take possession of my bold spirit, it can be easily accounted for, by reason of my sympathies with those brave fellows whom my untimely end would deprive of medical aid. But perhaps you can supply me with some argument which may serve to reconcile the idea of making one's person a gratuitous target for Spanish balls, with that remarkable share of prudence and discretion with which nature has endowed me."

"Glory," said our hero, with animation, "is at all times a sufficient inducement for a brave man to draw his sword; and when glory may be acquired without sacrifice of principle, who would then hesitate? Is not the fame of living a successful warrior, renowned through Christendom as the fearless champion of the right, or of dying in a just cause, with no wounds in the back,—to live to the end of time in the annals of history, and the memory of all those who have aught of admiration for courage,—sufficient to prompt the '*audax japeti genus*' (to borrow a phrase from your friend Horace) to do, or undergo, anything?"

"Since glory appears to be the chief inducement which calls you young heroes to the scene of strife, God forbid that I should ever be afflicted with the same mania for glory. Think you that one half of those who take arms, in the hope of acquiring glory, attain the high object for which they undergo and perform so

much? May not many an aspirant for military distinction be deprived of life without having had any opportunity of earning renown by valiant deeds, leaving all his fond visions unrealised, his very name even forgotten by the next generation at the farthest?"

"It may be so; but the sweet thought of having performed his duty would fully compensate for the want of fame in the mind of any real soldier, whose case may be similar to the one you have suggested. What, again, saith Horace? '*dulce et decorum est pro patriâ mori.*' Can you, good Master Hophman, imagine a more blissful death than that on the battle-field, when the expiring warrior is cheered by the reflection that his last acts were for the good of his beloved country?"

"Precisely so, my modern Achilles," said the matter-of-fact Hophman; "but I hope you do not mean to say that the cause in which you are about to engage is for the benefit of your country. You fight for glory, not for patriotism—two vastly different things: '*aut Horatius Staelburgizat, aut Staelburgus Horatiziat.*' You may remember, however, that the same Horace, to whose often-quoted verse you so triumphantly allude, confesses to have felt some aversion to putting his theory into practice by dying for his country. What saith he? '*relictâ non bene parulâ.*' I fear this renowned patriot greatly preferred the comfortable enjoyment of his good Falernian at his Sabine villa, to a voluntary immolation on the shrine of either patriotism or glory."

"What comparison can exist between the factious rivalries of ambitious Romans, and the important interests at stake in the present instance? In the former case, whichever party came off victorious, the state must be the ultimate loser; and even assuming the quarrel to be a just and right one, the benefit to be derived therefrom belongs solely to the people of Rome, to the exclusion of the rest of the then known world; since a change of masters must be a matter of total indifference to the miserable slaves who groaned under Roman servitude. In the cause to which I have dedicated my sword, I behold a conflict between civil and religious liberty, on the one hand, and bigotry and intolerance in their most revolting

forms, on the other. Should Spain succeed in forcing her tyrannical yoke on the gallant men of the Low Countries, and deluging the fertile lands which we behold with the blood of the bravest and the best, as it is her dearest desire to do, you cannot deny that the cause of liberty everywhere suffers. As we all hope to profit by the present struggle, even if it should only serve as an example to future would-be despots that their tyrannical decrees will not be promulgated with impunity, I hold him as a dastard and a traitor who refuses his help to a people so thoroughly deserving of it as those in question. In following patriotism, your conduct, however noble, is confined to a limited sphere, and those who reap the fruits of your trial are but few; while in helping them to right that suffer wrong, of whatever nation they may be, the world becomes your country, and each inhabitant a compatriot. Thus, you see, a lowly soldier may be a general philanthropist. Would you consider a man guiltless who saw a murder perpetrated without interfering to prevent so atrocious an act? And what is a simple murder to the cold-blooded massacres in which these ruthless Spaniards have the audacity to glory? Shall we be justified if we permit might to triumph over right without striking one blow in the latter's defence? I have girded on my sword, and trust never to lay it by until the haughty power of Spain be crushed."

"Oh, admirable follower of Demosthenes!" said the flippanant Hophman; "your eloquent denouncement of Philip of Spain excels even your great master's oration against Philip of Macedon. In good truth, your discourse is so moving that I am more than half tempted to devote my sword to so just a cause,—if, indeed, I can extract it from the scabbard (a fact of which I have some misgivings),—on one condition, nevertheless, that I should not be required to fight, which, being granted, I have no doubt that in all Prince William's army he would find no better soldier than myself. But, beshrew me, I have a vow upon me that I will only engage in combat in defence of my country, which, according to my views, unlike yours, consists only of my private laboratory and rooms at Tübingen. Should the Spaniards think fit to assail that, I should consider myself bound to fight 'pro aris et focis,'

like any ancient paladin. What food for amusement would it be at the imperial court, if Master Godfrey, the jester, could only be informed that that orthodox Romanist, the Count of Staelburg, was assisting the heretical Low Country men against holy Mother Church, and justifying his conduct on the plea of liberty of conscience!—Ha! ha! ha!"

Here the eccentric little individual indulged in so hearty a fit of laughter, that his seat on his piebald steed, which was never very secure, entirely failed him, and down came good Master Hophman, sword, spurs, and all, in a very spacious pool of mud and water. This little incident by no means put a stop to his hilarity, and the young medical practitioner remained in such enjoyment of 'otium cum dignitate' as his circumstances would permit. When a more lucid interval took possession of him, by a single bound he ensconced himself, including his appendage of sword and spurs, with much dexterity on the back of his patient beast. On this occasion he preferred sitting with his face to the horse's tail, as, he informed Staelburg, pure wisdom consists in keeping a good look-out both on the rear and front; and, besides, should a repetition of the same misfortune befall him, he would have an opportunity of depositing himself in the softest place, instead of leaving so important an event to the blind arbitrament of chance.

"In answer to your charge of inconsistency in defending Protestants against Romanists," said Staelburg, after Hophman had resumed his seat, "I would submit that, as true religion and undefiled is said to consist in visiting the widows and orphans in their affliction, and in keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, persecution can be no part of true religion. Whenever the Church, therefore, practises persecution, instead of argument, she forfeits all claim to allegiance on the part of her sons."

The resemblance Hophman bore to Thersites was, at most, but skin-deep; and the good-hearted little personage, unable to gainsay, and unwilling to deride, our hero's remarks, preserved a prudent silence. "Fools," says Butler, "are known by looking wise;" it is going rather too far to say wise men are known by looking foolish. But notwithstanding Hophman's levity and

apparent folly, he was not wanting either in kindness of heart or good sense.

At length the two travellers reached Leyden, and, on demanding a passage at the gates, and assuring the warder that they entered with no unfriendly views, they were suffered to pass.

Staelburg, who did not feel quite secure that the secret of his name might not meet with an undesirable publicity at the hands of Master Hophman, in a quiet manner suggested to him the necessity of observing a prudent reserve on such a topic; to which the latter answered, with more gravity than his companion gave him credit for possessing :

"Your secret, my lord, shall meet with all due respect at my hands. In fact, to obviate any difficulty, would it not be better if you were to assume a *nom de guerre*? For instance, by your gracious permission, I will style you the Junker Jophbert; your residence may be in Silesia, or the clouds, if you prefer so airy an abode. I pledge you my word, which has never been broken,—since, in fact, no one would ever be so foolish as to exact it,—that to none will I reveal what I know concerning you."

"Thanks, good Master Hophman. I perceive there still remains some discretion at the bottom of the mass of levity in which you indulge."

"Accept my best thanks for the dubious compliment. But stay, I am exhausted by the fatigue I have undergone in remaining serious during so long a time: it is necessary that I should arouse my drooping spirits by something more congenial to my taste than a long dissertation on glory.—How now, fellow!" continued he to a sturdy Hollander, who had presumed to lay hold of his bridle for the purpose of ascertaining some further insight into his character than that furnished by his motley exterior. "By what right do you dare to stop the spirited steed of one of the bravest knights in Christendom. Hands off! say I; or your ears shall be lopt off from that empty skull of yours. Rome was said to be a city of kings; Leyden seems to be a town of officers and gaolers."

"Methinks it would require a keener blade than that you possess," said the Dutchman, not in the least daunted by the

threat of the formidable Hophman, "to practise upon my ears. To my mind it seems somewhat beneath the dignity of so valiant a knight as you state yourself to be, to enter a populous town with the face turned to the tail of a piebald mare, like a condemned criminal. But I am in no humour for badinage,—I would therefore ask who you are, and for what purpose you come hither? I answer to your demand by what right I have thought fit to arrest your progress:—know that, in these startling times, it becomes the duty of every patriotic citizen to concern himself about the safety of the state, and to see that no spies or traitors enter our walls."

"It is well for you that you have thought proper to plead the exigencies of the times as an excuse for your uncourteous conduct, as it was my full intention to have made you the victim to appease my mighty wrath. Permit me, therefore, with the greatest brevity, to reply to the many points of your oration. In the first place, does it become parties professing so much respect for free-will as you Low-Country men to pass insulting comments on the manner in which it may please a free-born gentlemen, and, eke a friend to liberty, to enter one of your towns? See," said he, contriving by a sudden somersault to take possession of his proper place in the saddle, "with what ease I can resume my original position. Merit and wisdom sometimes leave their proper positions, only to return to them with greater splendour. If it is necessary to explain to you the reasons which induced me to take a step so incomprehensible to your limited understanding, I will inform you that, on my journey hither, I was beset by some seven or eight of the Duke of Alva's cavaliers."

"Whom, of course, you slew!" said the Dutchman, with a smile of incredulity.

"By no means. Had not your insolence prompted you to interrupt me, I should have informed you that the result of our encounter was my own destruction."

"In other words, they killed you?" interrupted the phlegmatic Dutchman, suffering not a muscle of his cheeks to display the slightest tendency to doubt.

"Precisely so. In fact, had it not been for the unexpected

arrival of my companion, who stopped the passage of my spirit as you now do the passage of my body, I should never have lived to make the statement to you. My soiled apparel bears ample testimony to the facts; and you need not wonder if, after so unexampled a recovery from death, I should prefer to give my full attention to the movements of any enemies who might endeavour to make an attack on me from behind. Man, unfortunately, has no eyes in his back; I was therefore compelled to turn the case-ments of my body towards them. Besides, it shall never be said of me that I turned my back on a foe."

"After so wonderful a resuscitation, I can certainly overlook any peculiarity of conduct," remarked our new acquaintance.

"Your wisdom, good citizen, manifests itself in your speeches. There now remains for me to reply to that part of your address which touches upon the character and motives of myself and companion, begging his worshipful pardon for mentioning myself before him. Tremble, Burgher! tremble! and kiss with reverence what little dust remains in this swampy country, when you are informed that you see in me William Cecil Lord Burleigh, Envoy Extraordinary (in good sooth) of her most gracious Majesty Elizabeth of England, France, and Ireland, Queen, Defender of the Faith; and in this right worthy gentleman, no less a personage than the Emperor of Germany, or the Great Mogul, I scarce know which. So I counsel thee, put on thy best behaviour, and treat us with all due courtesy."

The object of this harangue answering drily that their appearance in no degree corresponded with their assumed dignities, slowly walked away, to inform his fellow-countrymen (many of whom were beginning to resort to the spot where the trio were) of the arrival of the two mysterious strangers. As might be supposed, Staelburg, who feared much danger might arise from Hophman's volubility, was on the point of revealing the real facts of the case; but a most imploring look from his vivacious companion prompted him to forbear. He therefore beckoned to the citizen to return, which, having at length prevailed upon him to do, he decided on taking a middle course; with that view, he said:

"I think, my good friend, it would be as well if our circumstances were concealed from the majority of the citizens here present; and as privacy is an object to us, you would confer an obligation by conducting us to a quiet hostelry."

"Nay," said the self-constituted functionary; "it shall never be said that your first repast on the soil of the Netherlands was taken at a house of public accommodation. I pray you follow me, Mynheer Burleigh; and you, Mynheer Emperor, or Mogul, or what else ye may be; and you are heartily welcome to the best of my poor habitation. I will take no refusal," said he, seeing that our hero was somewhat averse to partaking of his hospitality.

Being thus pressed, the young Count and Master Hophman—the latter nothing loth—followed the Dutchman, whose name was Philip Naarveldt, to his abode, which was situated in one of the most handsome parts of that beautiful city. On arriving at the habitation, first the master of the house, and then his guests, were greeted with unaffected courtesy by the daughter of the former, a buxom, well-favoured damsel, of some seventeen or eighteen summers. In a few minutes a comfortable repast of bacon and eggs was spread before the new comers, to the merits of which both, and Hophman in particular, did ample justice. Nature being satisfied, the medical practitioner produced the wonderful pipe to which we have before introduced our readers; and in a few seconds host and guest, the former using a more modest instrument, were hobbing and nobbing as father and son, and producing smoke of five modern meerschaum power. Meanwhile our hero, to whom tobacco was a novelty, and who had consequently to acquire the art of converting his mouth into a temporary chimney, devoted his attention to Philip Naarveldt's daughter, Alfrude, whom he found possessed of more intelligence and education than he had anticipated, and who was soon an exception to Hophman's opinion of the Dutch women. All endeavours on Staelburg's part to effect an immediate introduction to the leading members of the Prince of Orange's camp were overruled by Hophman, who protested against any evasion of Mynheer Naarveldt's hospitality; and as the good man kindly insisted on their extending their stay, at least over the night, Staelburg was compelled to submit, having

previously obtained a promise from their entertainer to bring them under the Prince's notice on the morrow.

On the reiterated hints of Mynheer Naarveldt, Staelburg, with an unwilling concurrence from Hophman, proceeded to enlighten him into as much as he considered prudent of his future prospects and objects. The hero of the piebald steed, also, with becoming gravity, informed his host of his intentions, not without heaping some inward maledictions on the head of his companion for having spoilt the sport he anticipated from a recital of some apocryphical adventures, &c. On the plea of fatigue, both retired early to rest, in which pleasant state, by the reader's kind permission, we will leave them, in order to devote our attention to those parties whom we left in Baden.

CHAPTER XII.

The Rival Lover and his Schemes.

SOME few days after Staelburg's departure from Germany, Hardfels, who had never felt altogether at ease as to the justice of the course he had taken, determined to consult his worthy chaplain, Father Clement. However tenacious the Church of Rome may, in general, be of her claims upon the consciences of her sons,—either from a fear to offend her members and drive them to schism, or probably from the aversion manifested by individual priests to intrude upon the secrets of the laity, the confessional was not very strictly enforced. Father Clement was not so arrogant as to insist on being the confidant of the Baron's state mysteries; and it was not until solicited, that he gave his advice upon such subjects. Accordingly, the two might be seen in close conversation, pacing the spacious pleasure-grounds which adjoined the castle. The Baron of Hardfels began to open his mind to the good ecclesiastic, by observing that the absence of Staelburg might not have escaped his observation.

"I have, indeed, noticed that the visits of the young Count seemed to afford you but little satisfaction; and I have since understood that he has left this part of the country. If such be a voluntary act on his part, I think it may relieve your mind of much anxiety."

"Your information is correct: the young man has taken fare-well of us. I regret I cannot say his absence is altogether the suggestion of his own mind. You must be aware of the circumstances which brought him so frequently here. I certainly have no objection to his paying his addresses to my daughter, were it not that I have made a binding promise to the Baron of Würmer, that no exertions should be wanting on my part to promote a union between Bertha and himself. It is, indeed, most true, that no comparison can exist between the two lovers in point of good qualities. I admire the candour and ingenuousness of the one, as much as I detest the sinister designs and perfidious habits of the other. Nevertheless, having given my word to favour the suit of Würmer, I conceived that I should in no manner be acting up to that word, were I to suffer the Count of Staelburg to continue a visitor at my castle. Under this conviction, and fearing that in the then aspect of affairs the noble youth would fall a victim to the violent animosity of his rival, I have had recourse to harsh, yet, I trust, salutary measures. To be frank, I have obtained a warrant for his banishment from the Margrave. You may think my plans rather over-hasty, on hearing that it was but very recently that I put my decided veto upon his addresses; but I had, up to that time, hoped that I might have prevailed upon Würmer to release me from my engagement. He was obdurate, and I was compelled to act as I have done."

"I trust, nevertheless, you pondered well ere you decided on a course which you rightly term harsh. Remember that evil should not be done that good may arise."

"I assure you," said the layman, "that it was not without due consideration that I acted as I have. I think, from your knowledge of Würmer's character, you will agree with me, that those who become his enemies seldom live long,—either they are found murdered by banditti, or apoplexy carries them off; or

perhaps they are withdrawn from our sight without any clue being ascertained which may account for their disappearance. In short, I fear Staelburg's life would not be worth many days' purchase, exposed to the malice of the malignant noble."

"Since you profess so just an abhorrence of the vices of this Würmer, permit me to ask, Is it not somewhat strange that you should select him for your son-in-law?"

"I do not wonder at your remark, holy father. I bitterly regret the necessity of my present course of conduct. My word is passed, and cannot be broken; besides, political views, in a great measure, prompt me."

"Did not Herod, for his word's sake, shed innocent blood, committing a greater sin to avoid a less? and is not your case in all respects the counterpart of his? Would it not be better for you to break this rash promise to Würmer, and restore happiness to two fond hearts, than, by an over-scrupulous regard for honour, to doom your noble-minded daughter to the misery and degradation of becoming the bride of so unprincipled a man?"

A deep sigh escaped almost involuntarily from Hardfels, as he replied, with an air of ill-assumed indifference: "I said not that the promise I gave, and which causes me so much anxiety, was the result of rashness. I saw before me, and regret to say I still see, so great a number of dangers, that I think no other system than the one I have chosen could extricate me, and, indeed, all who are dear to me, from them."

The good priest's brow was oppressed by an appearance of deep melancholy, as he answered: "You are prepared, then, to avert evil by the sacrifice of your daughter. Abraham's faith was counted unto him for righteousness; but his intended offering was founded upon sufficient motives. Yours, I fear, has no such justification, and resembles more the bloody sacrifices to Moloch. The emergency must be great which could call for such a course. My advice to you is, incur any amount of danger rather than consign the idol of your heart to a fate in comparison to which death itself were happiness. You are not of so weak a frame of mind as to anticipate evil from the vain threats of Würmer?"

"In the absence of any alternative, I must pursue the

unhappy bent of my destiny. Bitter indeed is my disappointment to find myself no better than the tool of this man, who has succeeded in over-reaching me by his diabolical intrigues and schemes. My mind revolts at even holding the every-day intercourse of life with him. Imagine, therefore, my feelings on being compelled to accept him as the husband of my only daughter. Pity an unfortunate parent!"

Father Clement, having compassion on the deplorable condition of the unhappy Baron, forbore to intrude further on his confidence. But the latter, appreciating his delicacy, continued: "I observe, my worthy friend, that you would fain relieve my mind of anxiety by becoming the consoler of my sorrows, if you only knew their magnitude; but I fear I can never reveal to any human being the full extent of the fearful influence which Würmer possesses, and does not fail to exercise, over me, much more the means by which such influence is derived. You will think it strange that one so well versed in diplomacy as I am supposed to be, should be defeated by the superior finesse of Würmer. I trust I should never avail myself of the means he so unscrupulously practises, either to increase my political or private connexion; but, tied as I am by regard to integrity, I acknowledge myself no match to this scheming plotter."

"I can respect your motives; and I have no doubt that, should the sequel of this lamentable affair be ever brought to light, your conduct and principles would acquire additional renown from the disclosure. Be prudent, therefore; 'tarry thou the Lord's leisure;' act always with regard for justice and truth; and doubt not that, at some future time, Providence will bless your exertions in the cause of the right."

"Amen! amen!" exclaimed the Baron, fervently. "Right heartily do I wish that any sacrifice on my part would avert the impending ill from my darling Bertha; but any misfortune which might befall me would involve us all in one common destruction. I have, therefore, after much reflection, and with most unfeigned sorrow, resolved to make a surrender of one—the best-beloved one—in order to save the rest. Solomon said well, 'The heart knoweth his own bitterness, and a stranger doth not intermeddle

with his joy.' You, my trusty adviser, are certainly anything but a stranger to me, but your sacred calling exempts you from being afflicted with the trials which now encompass me; and your mind, kind and affectionate though I know it to be, can in no measure understand the bitterness of my spirit. The deep waters of affliction are indeed come over my soul."

"Take courage," said the benevolent priest. "I have no wish to act the part of the stranger by intermeddling with my joy; but permit me to say, 'I have been young, and now am old, yet never saw I the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging their bread.'"

Here their subject was interrupted by the appearance of Karl, who respectfully announced to Hardfels that the Baron of Würmer was waiting the honour of a private interview with him. Subduing every appearance of his late excitement, the Baron of Hardfels once more assumed the character of the polished courtier, for which his admirable self-control well qualified him. On entering the apartment where his visitor was expecting him, the Baron greeted him with calm yet haughty courtesy.

With a curtness of manner the reverse of pleasant to Hardfels, Würmer said, in a tone of some arrogance: "I have merely intruded upon you to ascertain if you had made any preparations for the fulfilment of your promise to me. As I understand my courtly rival was here a few days since, I thought it not unlikely that all recollection of your engagements to me had escaped your mind."

"Have you ever yet found me fail in any of my engagements?" said Hardfels, with much gravity. "Have I not used all possible means to promote your suit? You are certainly in possession of my word, which is indeed most sacred to me; but I consider your present tone and bearing presumptuous."

Well versed though a person may be in effrontery and arrogance, it is seldom that calm dignity fails to cow and subdue him. It was thus with Würmer. Little used to courteous conduct, when the object of such a procedure was gained, he could not but adopt a more polite behaviour in the presence of one who, however his inferior in some things, far outshone him

in grace and refinement. In somewhat piteous accents, he exclaimed :

" Pardon me ! If my feelings have carried me too far, let my earnest love for your daughter plead for me. [A cold shudder came over the elder noble, as Würmer spoke of affection for the high-souled Bertha.] I had understood that Staelburg was very recently here ; and the jealousy of my passion suggested motives for his visit, and even encouragement on your part."

" Suffer me to inquire by what means you became aware of the young Count's visit. I thought I had put an effectual stop to the system of espionage practised here."

Würmer was seldom at a loss for a lie to conceal his real designs ; but, on this occasion, even this useful art failed him ; and he remained speechless for some time in the presence of his interrogator, who continued :

" Since you do not seem inclined to answer my question, I put my own construction on your silence. I suppose the fact is that one of your creatures has been employed to lurk about my residence, and convey to you accurate intelligence of all that passes therein. Is it not so ? You are, of course, aware of the causes which led to the dismissal of my page Michael ?"

Würmer, for once detected by a person whose common sense he considered so far beneath his own, fearing that nothing but an assumption of candour could suit his purpose, said, with an ingenuous air :

" I cannot but think you have put a very unfavourable interpretation upon my motives in acting as I have. I certainly did give the youth you mention a slight gratuity to guard my interests generally. It seems that, with an over-officious zeal, this Michael took upon himself to become a spy ; but what reliance can be placed upon the word of so abandoned a wretch as he appears to be, especially when you have my word in express contradiction to his ?"

An expression of contempt was visible in every feature of the Baron of Hardfels' classic countenance, on Würmer's allusion to his word.

" I regret to hear you deny a fact which I should have

thought it would have suited your interests, as well as your honour, to have admitted. As I have an admission of the means practised in one case, I will make no further inquiries into the other."

"Your remarks are severe—in fact, more so than the circumstances of the case warrant. What will not love, on the one hand, and hate, on the other, urge us to perform? However, excuse my remarking that reproaches such as these I did not expect, and will not tolerate. You know the extent of my power: thwart me, and your doom is sealed. I did not come here to be trifled with."

"I am well aware of the hold you have on me, and am almost tempted to prepare for the worst, rather than continue in the horrible agony of mind in which your proposals place me."

"Never mind! never mind!" said Würmer, impetuously, a malignant grin betraying the satisfaction he experienced from Hardfels' admission. "We waste time. The object of my visit was rather to ascertain what preparations you had made for the union of your daughter and myself, than to indulge in these recriminations."

"Hear me!" said Hardfels. "In pursuance of my engagement to you, I have effectually disposed of the young Count of Staelburg; so that you need not, in future, fear any opposition from him. You will now have every opportunity of obtaining Bertha's consent, without which, you will remember, the whole arrangement entered into between us falls to the ground."

A dark scowl lowered on Würmer's features as he heard these words; but, suppressing all appearance of disappointment, he answered: "You have so far done well; but I suppose no steps have been taken to prevent a repetition of the annoyance I have been subjected to by this haughty Staelburg and your own malapert son. Without doubt, when the affairs of the state require your attendance at court, the two lovers will carry on their amorous intercourse behind your back."

"I have guarded against any such contingency by procuring a warrant for his banishment from the Margrave; and I have given strict orders that no correspondence shall be held with him

during his absence. He informed me it was his intention to quit Germany forthwith; and I believe he has carried his resolution into effect. Are you now satisfied?"

"You have acted, indeed, honourably in this respect. But I suppose my gay rival has betaken himself to some locality whence it will be easy for him to pay a visit to Kielsworth during your absence?"

"I neither know nor care to know aught of his intentions. It is not my practice to employ spies to watch over other's movements, as, it seems, is the custom of some."

Würmer winced at this last taunt; but, with an expression of diabolical malignity, added: "You ask me if I am satisfied of your sincerity. I require but one more proof. If I am unable to effect any impression on your fair daughter's mind in the space of three months, let her be sent as a novice to the Convent of our Lady at Mentz, where, should she still continue perverse, let her take the black veil, and spend the remainder of her days in seclusion. This is my only demand, and, you must confess, it is lenient enough."

The effect of this last speech exceeded even Würmer's most sanguine anticipation. The remembrance of Hardfels' sarcasm was entirely effaced by this moment of triumph. He had now the fiendish pleasure of inflicting the most refined torments on the proud, though stern, parent; and his implacable spirit rejoiced in the misery he was creating. The calm and philosophical Hardfels was excited almost to desperation by the unfeeling suggestion he had heard. His limbs trembled, and his tongue almost refused to give vent to the working of his mind. Remembering, however, the gratification which the sight of his anguish would afford Würmer, he added, with as much composure as he could assume:

"I cannot acknowledge the leniency of your demands. But as I am no longer a free agent, however my heart may be racked with the emotions which a father must feel, I promise you that, if within six months you fail in persuading my daughter to become your bride, I will act as you have proposed. You are at liberty at any time to come as a wooer within my walls; and

I cannot but hope that an obedient consent on her part to your overtures will spare me the necessity of enforcing them in the manner you suggest. I presume it to be your wish to see my daughter now?"

"No, Baron of Hardfels; it is never my intention to become a woman's slave. I leave the whole management of this delicate affair in your hands; and should you fail in bringing about my designs by fair persuasion, do not imagine I shall remit you the performance of your last undertaking. I grant you the six months; but at its expiration, expect no mercy from me."

"Your last speech is greatly at variance with your plea of love as an excuse for your unmanly conduct. I have no alternative but submission; and whatever conduct you may practise, you will find me at all times prepared to redeem my word."

"Be it so, then. I have performed my task," said Würmur, as, extending his hand with a bad grace to his intended father-in-law, he prepared to depart. To his intense chagrin, Hardfels refused to accept it, saying, with becoming dignity, that a person who could use such language as that he had just heard was unworthy of the hand of a gentleman.

Exclaiming, in a tone far from gentle, that no opposition to his will should be passed over with impunity, Würmer left the apartment.

Having left Hardfels Castle, the worthy Würmer rode along at an easy pace, trusting to meet his sworn ally, Ruffo, and ascertain what progress that business-like individual was making for the completion of his designs on his enemies. Since the events detailed in our tenth chapter, Ruffo had thought it best to make himself somewhat scarce, lest a revelation of the misfortune which had befallen him should call forth more indignation than sympathy from his benevolent employer. Being unable to meet with his able coadjutor, Würmer gave himself up to a train of thought, which might be resolved into nearly the following words:

"Fortune favours the brave. I have played a deep game, with much success. So that old dolt, Hardfels, thought to oppose his will to mine: let him look to himself. Those who make an

enemy of me have good cause to rue the deed. Deny me his hand, indeed! deeply shall he regret having offered such an insult to one so fully capable of resenting it. I have obtained his promise, that in six months' time she shall be an inmate of my mansion or a convent. I did not go to Mentz to see my good aunt Ursula, the Lady Abbess of the nunnery there, for nothing. Once under her clutches, I am almost tempted to pity the unfortunate novice; but no, she has despised me, let her meet the fate she has provoked. My path, then, is clear; everything favours my bold projects. Bertha become sister Cecilia at Mentz, her goods become the property of holy Mother Church, nothing thwarts me but this hot-headed boy, who dared overcome me in the contest. He must die, no matter how; and the convent of our Lady at Mentz succeeds to all the vast property of the old Baron after his death. My revered kinswoman will infringe the Bull 'in cenâ domini,' so far as to bestow a considerable portion of the spoil upon the person to whom she owes the whole; and then my ambition has reached its goal. Hardfels, deprived of both his children, cannot long survive; and thus shall I have gratified every desire of my heart. I shall have ruined the proudest peer in Germany; deprived him of the objects of his fondest affections; possessed myself of his estates; and who will after that say my vengeance for occasional slights, and at last studied insults, has not been full and complete? Then remains but Staelburg to dispose of; and he is likely, certainly, to become a dangerous rival to me. I had hoped that I should have obtained from Hardfels some hint as to his movements; but the old fellow either does not, or fains not to know anything of him. Nevertheless, by perseverance, no doubt, I shall find some clue to his whereabouts which may enable me to confer an essential obligation upon him. If I could but find that able rascal, Ruffo, I could soon ascertain what probability there might be for his becoming the instrument of my vengeance. What folly, on his part, to suffer him to elude his fate! I wonder how he fared with that fellow, Albert? What comparison, after all, can the boasted pleasures derivable from the maintenance of probity bear to the delightful satisfaction of possessing so overwhelming a power over the lives

and fortunes of our fellow-creatures? By whatever means this influence may be obtained, sweet is it, and amply does it repay its fortunate owner for the scorn with which those who pride themselves on greater rectitude of conduct treat him. Philip of Macedon, or whoever he may be, was not far wrong in saying that he would rather be feared than loved. I fully concur in the justice of his remarks, and intend acting up to it. What a farce! for Conrad Würmer to assume the appearance of a lover, to work woe both on father, daughter, and all his foes!"

We think, however, we have quite disgusted our readers with this portrait of triumphant vice; and we will, by their concurrence, once more direct their attention to the career of him for whose undeviating rectitude Würmer conceived such supreme contempt.

CHAPTER XIII.

Martial Preparations.

AT an early hour, Staelburg and Hophman quitted their domiciles, and made their appearance at the breakfast-table of their worthy entertainer. We will not enter upon a critical discussion of the several viands which the generosity of Mynheer Naarveldt had prepared for his guests. Suffice it to say, that all was of the best quality, and afforded great satisfaction to Master Hophman, who was a better connoisseur on such matters than our hero, and who, with great gravity, informed the little party that when he last had the honour of dining with the Emperor of Germany, he partook of no better fare. This allusion did not fail to elicit a smile, even from the placid Naarveldt. Having completed breakfast, their host intimated to Staelburg and Hophman his readiness to perform his promise of the previous evening. The medical practitioner at first seemed inclined to defer his introduction, but, altering his intention, thankfully accepted the offer. A few minutes' walk brought the citizen and his protégés to the building

fitted up as the head-quarters of William of Orange and his brethren in arms. No external pomp served to indicate the abode of so distinguished a man; and poor Hophman could be scarcely persuaded that the taciturn Dutchman had not been practising some deception upon him by way of retaliation for his introductory address. A flight of massive stone steps led from the street to the door, at which was stationed an individual probably intended to officiate in the capacity of valet, but who, from the martial appearance of his garb and features, might have seen service in a less peaceful occupation. Mynheer Naarveldt was no stranger to the janitor, who with no loss of time, on being acquainted with his errand, informed the renowned Prince of his presence.

In an apartment whose furniture bore no token of luxury, a tall, erect personage, of about the middle age, was seated, deeply engaged in the completion of a plan of some fortifications. The Prince of Orange was of a complexion once fair, although now embrowned by the effects of exposure to the elements and honest exertions in the service of his country. His hair was of a rich glossy chestnut; his nose slightly aquiline; and in his full, firm eye, vigour and resolution were combined in no ordinary degree. His dress, which was worn with no regard to effect, was simple and tasteful; and his every action betokened the gentleman and the soldier. So intent was the Prince at his occupation, that he was, for a moment, unaware of the presence of Mynheer Naarveldt and his protégés. Courteously rising from his seat, he apologised for his absence of mind, and, having been introduced in due form to Jophbert (as we must now call our hero) and Hophman, desired them to be seated. In a clear, rich, voice, he inquired of the worthy citizen in what way he could have the pleasure of serving either himself or friends? After a few preliminary remarks from Naarveldt, Jophbert briefly informed the Prince that he had left Germany in the hope that his small talents might be employed for the benefit of a people with whom he had so much sympathy, and confessed a great desire to perfect himself in the science of arms under so distinguished a general as the Prince of Orange.

We are not about to enter into a long dissertation, to prove to

the reader that, by a sort of involuntary communication of ideas akin to the rapport of the spiritualists, valour and merit at a single glance detect similar qualities in another. However this may be, no sooner had our hero finished speaking, than William of Orange shook him by the hand, and assured him that he was welcome.

"Jophbert," said he, after musing for a little while, "I recollect none of that name. From what part of Germany do you come?"

"From the Margravate of Baden Baden, your highness," answered Jophbert. "But as I have hitherto lived in seclusion, it is not unlikely so humble a name as that I bear never reached your ears."

Forming a shrewd conjecture of the real facts of the case, the Prince added, with a bland smile: "I have no doubt that the fame you will acquire in the present campaign will amply atone for your late seclusion." Then turning to Hophman, who had hitherto been making a series of salaams which would have done honour to any Parisian *petit maître*, "In what manner, good sir, may I promote your interests?"

With an air of considerable gravity, Hophman commenced: "Most mighty and world-renowned Prince, I am none other than an unworthy son of Esculapius, by name Hophman, who have studied at the University of Tübingen, and am come to offer my services to any of your good soldiers who may meet with wounds or disease. I regret that circumstances exist which will render my stay here but short; during that time, however, your highness may rely on my assistance to the best of my power."

"I am glad to see you. Devotion to our cause, from any person, in any station of life, shall not pass unnoticed or unrewarded. I am sorry there is at present no university here, in which you might continue your course of reading in the intervals between active service. Should I be successful in ridding the country of its present oppressors, my first desire would be to make every preparation for the increase of learning. If you should require assistance at any time, you will know where to apply. As you may have need to traverse the country, here is a warrant of safe

conduct, which every follower of the Orange banner will respect. You say your name is Hophman? Methinks I have seen you before, at Vienna."

Hophman appeared disposed to inform the Prince that his skill and science would admit of no addition; but ultimately said, laying some slight stress on his own name:

"Your highness has never seen Frederick Hophman before, or I am greatly mistaken."

"Perhaps not," said William of Orange, eyeing him with a penetrating glance.—"As for you, my good friend," continued he, turning to our hero, "unless you prefer any other arrangement, I shall consider you as forming a member of my body-guard; and I think you will find that the gentlemen of my guard have as much opportunity of facing danger and acquiring renown as any other troops in my service:"

Here the aforesaid valet announced that Count Battenburg, an officer of experience and valour, who had displayed much devotion to the Prince and his fortunes, and Peter Van der Werf, the burgomaster of the town, awaited an audience. Whereupon the Prince, observing that the society of brave men must be of mutual advantage, desired them to be instantly admitted.

William received Battenburg with the esteem and cordiality which his good services deserved. Van der Werf had figured more in a private capacity, and nothing but dire necessity would have aroused him to become a distinguished actor in the startling scenes of the times; but although his abilities were of a quiet nature, and his character modest and retiring, none could possess greater patriotism, or more undaunted courage, either of an active or passive nature, than the exemplary burgomaster. The Prince of Orange was not of a nature to be captivated with outward show, and his intelligent mind soon discerned the merits of this brave and good man, simple though his manners, and humble his garb, might be. Thinking that the society of himself and Hophman might be an intrusion on the debates of the others, Jophbert and his companion withdrew, after having taken a respectful leave of the Prince, who assured them he should be happy to have a further conference with them during their stay at Leyden.

Naarveldt remained to assist in the deliberations of the little counsel; and as Hophman felt disposed to make his ramble in private, Jophbert was at perfect liberty to patrol the town until his worthy host should be at leisure. Although, perhaps, not quite so large as at present, Leyden was, at the time we speak of, a town of much consequence, and of considerable architectural beauty; and its trade, previous to the insurrection, had been extensive. Jophbert's eye traversed with admiration the various buildings which decorated the Broad Street,—a street considered by many one of the finest in the world, and the beauty of which was greatly enhanced by the scrupulous regard for cleanliness which so eminently distinguishes our Dutch neighbours. His attention, however, was quickly directed to the numerous groups of citizens who were congregated to discuss the momentous topics of the day, and to make preparations for the future. Approaching one of the little parties, he found an elderly man of respectable appearance lecturing his auditors on the heinousness of the conduct of the Spaniards, whom he demonstrated, to the perfect satisfaction of his hearers, to be none other than the Antichrist of the Apocalypse. In another quarter, a younger man, of fanatical appearance, was addressing those of his own views on the text, "Through much tribulation shall ye enter the kingdom," which, it is very probable, the preacher, in the warmth of his temperament, really imagined to be the establishment of their own liberties,—at least, the earnestness with which he exhorted his flock to "fight the good fight of faith," in which they were engaged, rather justified any such idea. However, in all exciting times, enthusiasts spring up quite like mushrooms, and well is it if they confine themselves to the inculcation of patriotism and constancy. Farther on a follower of John of Leyden, otherwise John Bocauld (whose ultramontane views led to his pitiable end, which nevertheless in nowise abated the zeal of such of his disciples as escaped), was, in gestures the most impassioned, enforcing his opinions on the multitude he was collecting. This preacher, notwithstanding the fiery ardour he displayed, seemed to meet with but little success in carrying conviction into the hearts of his numerous hearers. Thought Jophbert, as he quitted the throng,

Here are certainly abundant opportunities of trying all things, whether they be good or not. The next knot he encountered was composed of men of a higher rank in society, who were listening with much interest to an harangue delivered by a citizen of good address on the perfidy of the Queen of England in not taking a more active part on their behalf. They had, he said, despatched as an envoy a man possessing the eloquence of a Boanerges to induce her to espouse their cause; but he feared that all the energy of the patriotic Janus Dousa would fail in rousing that over-politic princess to action. Much as our hero felt disposed to fraternise with this last assembly, he easily ascertained, from the suspicious glances with which he was regarded, that his society was considered no improvement. He therefore continued his stroll, until he was beset by a worthy armourer from Liege, who took advantage of the state of things at Leyden to dispose of a little of his hardware. With the utmost volubility this son of Vulcan disanted on the various good qualities of the weapons he offered for sale: if only half of which were true, the gorgets and hauberks he vended would render the fortunate wearer considerably more invulnerable than Achilles. On Jophbert's equipments he, of course, bestowed remarks anything but complimentary; and not all the assurances that the young adventurer could give him, that every article he wore was of the best Milan manufacture, could convince the armourer of the superiority of such articles over his own. To ease himself of his importunities, Jophbert purchased a dagger of highly tempered steel, of which the sheath was elaborately ornamented, intending it as a present for his generous entertainer. Having, by these means, procured a little rest, he continued his progress, until he found himself in the midst of a band of well-armed gentlemen, many of whom spoke the German language. Probably recognising in our hero a compatriot, he met with a courteous reception; and some of the party, on finding him a stranger in those parts, gave him some useful information as to their views and hopes. He was much pleased to find in his acquaintances his future associates in the body-guard of the Prince. These last being chiefly natives of Nassau.—a territory of which William of Orange was count, and to which

he had retired on the failure of his first attempts for the liberation of the Low Countries,—there existed between Jophbert and them a nearer connexion than he could have formed with his well-meaning but phlegmatic Dutch neighbours; and it is not to be wondered at if, in a short time, a very cordial feeling existed between them. Although the reiters of the guard attempted to put the best construction possible on the aspect of affairs, it could not be denied that their position was one of great peril. Notwithstanding their cause was certainly one of right against might, yet it was might of no ordinary nature with which they had to contend. The Spanish troops, their adversaries, had hitherto passed for the finest in Europe. The renowned cavalry of Spain, matchless in arms and discipline; the infantry also, which, if not formed and used originally in Spain, had received material improvements at her hands, had shown their valour on many a hard-fought field, and, officered by brave and experienced commanders, formed no mean opponents. What, indeed, had the Dutch general to oppose to these famous warriors? With the exception of his German auxiliaries, his troops were chiefly raw levies. However well versed in martial habits the Prince of Orange might be, he had but few officers in his camp from whom much could be expected. Notwithstanding the general execration of the tyranny of the Spanish yoke, on minor matters there was but very little unity among the Patriots. Protestants viewed Romanists with suspicion, while demagogues excited the people to a fanatical hatred of their aristocratic leaders; and it required the whole of the exertions of the politic Prince to prevent the differences springing up into open variance. Wholesome emulation is at all times productive of benefit; but jealousy and ill-will are mischievous intruders on subjects upon which all should be harmony. The brutal conduct of their enemies, on all occasions, prevented any retrograde conduct upon the part of those who had once taken up arms on behalf of their country. In fact, such had been the studied contempt for honour and the laws of war displayed by their antagonists, that each (whatever his opinions on other things might be) was firmly resolved to undergo any possible amount of privations rather than trust to the mercy of the

Spaniards; for well they knew that a repetition of the brutal massacre perpetrated at Rotterdam would arise in every place which opened its gates to the enemy.

This last topic underwent considerable discussion on the part of the gentlemen of the guard; and many were the fierce invectives launched upon those who could conceal their murderous purposes under the treacherous pretext of making a harmless passage through an unsuspecting town. On further inquiries, Jophbert was horrified to hear that, on this pretence, the Count de Bossut, at the head of a numerous party of Spaniards, had obtained admittance into the ill-fated town, after which, with a barbarity almost unparalleled in history, he gave up the city to the sword, so that very few eluded his diabolical vengeance. One house alone escaped the fury of the incensed soldiery, by the ingenious stratagem of spilling the blood of cats about the threshold and door; so that those who thirsted for the blood of the inmates passed on, in the full belief that others had forestalled them in the work of slaughter. Conduct such as this, of course, put an end to all thoughts of capitulation or submission; and the determination of both foreigners and Low-Country men in the guard was, to sell their lives as dearly as possible, in preference to paying any heed to the bland proposals of their foes.

Here and there a haughty member of the Gueux, as the aristocratic instigators of the scheme were formerly called,—a term originally bestowed upon them by the Princess Margaret of Parma, in contempt for their having petitioned for their rights, and since adopted by them as the name of their party,—passed you on his way to the council-chamber. A desire for revenge rankled deep in these men's minds, on account of the ignominious death which was carried into effect on two of their order, the Counts Egmont and Horne—nobles of patriotic nature and kindly disposition, who had vainly striven to bring Philip of Spain to reason, and save the effusion of blood, which they foresaw would result from his obstinate bigotry. From the number of men of distinction who thronged the streets, the reiters of the guard augured that a project of some consequence was under discussion; and they were not far wrong in their surmises. Each was promising himself

ample opportunities of gaining renown, and a general desire to meet the foe manifested itself throughout them ; for although the Dutch army was not very numerous, it displayed no lack of courage.

Perceiving his good friend Naarveldt at no great distance, the young Count quitted his brethren in arms, and joined him. He ascertained, with some little astonishment, that the volatile Hophman had, at the risk of falling in with the Spaniards (who were at that time commencing a blockade of Haarlem), resolved to proceed thither to acquire what information he could of the state of affairs there. Mynheer Naarveldt, being a man of early habits, proposed to Jophbert to partake of dinner with him, and would not hear of any excuse. Their party consisted of a soldier rather younger than Jophbert, named De Wencke, who seemed to regard the buxom daughter of their entertainer with a very affectionate eye. At the conclusion of their frugal repast, all gathered round the ample fire, and enjoyed the good schnaps which Naarveldt had broached in honour of his guests. The first toast given was, Success to the cause in which they were engaged ; and an enthusiastic reception it met with. De Wencke had a very good idea of war, and made many remarks on the prospects of the Patriots, which much prepossessed our hero in his favour. In answer to a question from Jophbert, Naarveldt, who was a man of clear judgment and much prudence, roused himself from his taciturnity, and entered into a clear comment on the respective positions of the Prince and his opponents. His views were, that their leader—against whom the experienced Duke of Alva, hitherto considered almost invincible, had made but little progress—would maintain the independence of the revolted provinces until adequate assistance should arrive from England or the German empire. De Wencke felt much alarmed for the safety of Alftrude, on hearing Naarveldt's opinion that ere long the Spaniards would doubtlessly attack Leyden, especially should they succeed in reducing Haarlem, and that, unless material additions were made to the strength of the latter place, its capture might probably ensue ; but he added, that in the then aspect of affairs, it was impossible to foretel what might happen. The

Prince of Orange, before the commencement of another campaign, would, he felt sure, make all necessary arrangements for its defence; and he fully relied on the prowess of the burghers, and what garrison the Prince might be able to leave, to repel any attacks. "We shall see startling events," he continued, "before we shall be able to sit every man under his own vine and his own fig-tree. You will see, our Prince will prove himself in every way equal to the arduous task he has accepted; but I fear the impetuous courage of his noble brothers, Louis and Henry, will bring them into danger. Our fleet, too, is well manned, and will prove a great assistance to us."

William, by the advice of Admiral Coligny, had equipped a powerful fleet of nearly one hundred and fifty sail, which had already done good service in capturing the stores of the Spaniards, and intercepting their merchant vessels; so that whatever might be the fate of the land-forces of the Patriots, William's navy gained the advantage by sea, and was the school of a bold and adventurous class of mariners, from whom sprung the Van Tromps and De Ruyters of latter times.

The good Naarveldt accepted Jophbert's present with every token of gratitude, and vowed that, if his life were preserved, the dagger should drink deep of Spanish blood at every opportunity. At his earnest request our young hero consented to take up his quarters at his hospitable abode until the call of honour should summon him from Leyden. In De Wencke, Jophbert found a useful assistant in his future career; but we will leave their exploits to future chapters.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Dutch War for Liberty.

To give the reader some idea of the aspect of affairs at the period of Jophbert's joining the insurgents, and his subsequent adventures in their service, our time, perhaps, will be well employed in taking a brief review of the positions and hopes of both Royalist and Patriot; for which purpose we have availed ourselves of much valuable information contained in Watson's admirable History of the Reign of Philip II.

Frederick de Toledo was appointed to the command of a well-equipped army, with the view to blockade Haarlem; after the capture of which, the Spaniards trusted, the other chief towns of Holland would gladly return to their allegiance. The prowess of the Spanish army, however, was no less to be dreaded than the deep intrigues in which the Royalists were so successfully engaged. Either from a spirit of humanity, or, what is far more probable, with a view of effecting by fraud a task which force might with difficulty accomplish, Toledo had procured the Romanists of Amsterdam—a town distinguished for its devotion to the Spaniards—to remonstrate with the inhabitants of Haarlem on the inutility of any resistance to the royal forces. Some of the principal citizens, seduced by the wily appeals of the Spanish agents, had so far forgotten their duty to their adopted leader, as to send deputies to the Spanish camp to make arrangements for the surrender of the town. Fortunately, for the cause of liberty, the prudent Riperda, to whom the Prince of Orange had committed the government of Haarlem, having received timely intimation of their intention, assembled the inhabitants, and in manly and forcible language represented to them the folly of reposing any trust in their perfidious foes. Contrasting the fate of those brave men, who had gallantly maintained their towns in opposition to the regal authority, with the wretched catastrophe which befel the timid burghers who had submitted, he prevailed upon the townsmen to reject any overtures the

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Spanish or their treacherous neighbours might propose. From the importance of the place, the greatest skill of Toledo and Orange was called forth, the one in attacking, and the other in making preparations for the defence of the town. The better to enable him to superintend the arrangements for the raising of the siege, the Prince had left Delft, his previous quarters, and had taken up his residence among his many attached adherents at Leyden, which latter town was distant from Haarlem about fifteen miles.

Desirous of supplying the besieged with provisions and ammunition, one of the first acts of the Prince of Orange was to send a number of troops, amounting to nearly three thousand men, with an ample supply of all necessaries, trusting to elude the vigilance of the Spaniards, and mitigate the sufferings of the men of Haarlem during the blockade. Anxious to let pass no opportunity of distinguishing himself, our hero was, at his earnest request, suffered to join the small body of cavalry accompanying the expedition. Although he knew his brethren in arms to have a very slight acquaintance with discipline and military manœuvres, Jophbert imagined that the spirit which animated them would enable the little party to overcome any straggling body of the enemy who might endeavour to harass their march. A short time sufficed to make all preparations, and, amidst the acclamations of the townsmen, the little band started on their enterprise.

Campaigning in the winter is at all times disagreeable; but at the time of which we speak the art of war had not attained its present position, and many means of providing against the severity of the climate, with which soldiers are now acquainted, had to be dispensed with by the Dutch Patriots and their antagonists, the latter of whom must have found the change in the temperature between their own sunny country and that in which they were stationed to an unpleasant degree. A most unfortunate time, indeed, was it for any enterprise: the cold was most intense; and, in a land so subject to severe winters as Holland, the present was almost without an equal. Nothing daunted by the unpromising aspect of nature, the officers of the detachment contrived to maintain some appearance of order in the ranks of their

followers. Their march over the drifted snow was necessarily accompanied with much difficulty and even danger; while the torrent of the same substance, which the unpitying wind blew full in their faces, was almost sufficient to deter even a Dutchman from his purpose. Whatever the young adventurer's opinion might be of the martial prowess of his brethren, he could not but applaud their indomitable perseverance. Whether this laudable spirit arose from the desire which animated them, of stealing a march over their wily antagonists, none of whom had hitherto presumed to impede their advance, or from an ardent wish to assist their neighbours, it is not for us to say. At any rate, they now trusted, the most dangerous part of their journey was past, and that they might reap the reward of their toil. Great, therefore, was their disappointment on hearing the fierce war-shout of "España! España!" and finding themselves attacked by a party of Spanish cavalry, supported by an overwhelming body of infantry, who, favoured by the falling snow, had advanced to the charge before the Patriots were aware of the extent of the danger. The onslaught of the cavaliers, as impetuous as the depth of the snow would allow, completely annihilated what little discipline the officers had preserved in the detachment. Those who had displayed such admirable resolution when exposed to the fury of the elements, were seized with a sudden panic at the presence of the enemy, and, despite every effort to rally them, hurried from the field, leaving arms, provisions, and ammunition. Notwithstanding the ignominious flight of many of their number, there were some who trusted to revenge the massacre of their countrymen at Naarden, and other places of which the Spaniards had obtained possession. Those, unable to form any line sufficiently strong to withstand the onslaught of their impetuous foes, carried on a desultory hand-to-hand fight for some time; and no effort was wanting on the part of the little party of cavalry, and indeed of the officers generally, to retrieve the fortune of the day. To troops of so ardent a temperament as the Spaniards, the success of the first charge nearly always decided the engagement; for, mindful of their old reputation for valour and discipline, they seldom suffered the advantage to be wrested from them. Repeat-

edly had Jophbert and his companions attacked the Royalists, with as much vigour as the drifting snow, and the jaded condition of their horses, would permit; but the Spaniards, favoured by the weather and the superiority of their steeds and arms, bravely repulsed them. The chief strength of the hostile band, however, consisted in their pikemen, whose long weapons made immense havoc amongst the broken ranks of the insurgents. Our hero's charger had received a serious wound from one of these, and finding the gallant beast unable longer to bear him to the charge, Jophbert dismounted, and continued the combat on foot. In this situation his good broadsword was enabled to do much service amongst the excited foe. His own position and that of his gallant brethren in arms was now jeopardous in the extreme. The majority of the foot soldiers, of whom indeed the insurgent army was chiefly composed, had profited by the brave resistance of the cavalry to make good their own retreat; and this resolute body of heroes, with such of the others as scorned to fly, were surrounded by the Spaniards. Jophbert was personally engaged with some three or four of his own countrymen, who had espoused the opposite cause; and but for the assistance of a reiter of the guard, who marked his danger, he might never have lived to fight again: as it was, a halbert had inflicted a severe wound in the thigh, and he could lend but little help to the survivors of the Patriots, who were attempting to cut a retreat through the sea of enemies. At a considerable risk to himself, the reiter, to whose good services Jophman was indebted for his life, mounted him behind himself, and, thus heavily laden, the noble steed which bore them succeeded in breaking through the Walloons and Germans who threatened their rear. The resistance of the advanced guard, although attended with almost complete destruction to themselves, was, in reality, the only means of saving the rear of the insurgent army, who effected a disorderly retreat, not without some loss of life, to Leyden, whither the remnant of their more honourable comrades were compelled by necessity to betake themselves, the condition of the country preventing the Spaniards from continuing a very active pursuit. The whole of the baggage of the Dutch army, including the stores which were so much needed at Haarlem, fell

into the hands of the victors, who, elated with their success, resumed the blockade.

The loss to the vanquished was indeed heavy: more than a fifth of their number were left upon the field; and the failure of the enterprise was calculated to throw a gloom over the whole Patriot cause. The pitiful appearance presented by those who had on the morning started full of hope and resolution, struck terror into the stout hearts of the men of Leyden; their fear now was that, before long, Haarlem, destitute of resources, must fall into the hands of the enemy, who would then turn the cannon, destined to accomplish their defeat, against the ramparts of their own town. They were well aware that their warm devotion to the cause of liberty would prevent any mercy being shown them by the Spaniards; and melancholy were the forebodings of the bravest spirits as to the future, which not all the remonstrances of their adored Prince and his more sanguine adherents could banish.

Jophbert's wound had become much inflamed by the fast motion of the horse, and, faint and exhausted with the loss of blood, he could scarcely dismount. Great was the sympathy of the honest burghers for the brave youth who had battled so manfully for their cause; and many were the offers of every assistance which it lay in their power to afford. But the generous Naarveldt would surrender his helpless charge to none, stating that he was in a better position to provide all necessary delicacies for the wounded soldier than many of the kind-hearted townsmen. He assisted in carrying him to his residence. His equally benevolent daughter was much affected in beholding her father's guest in so lamentable a state. Perchance she derived some little consolation from the reflection that no such evil had befallen De Wencke. Every attention that kindness could suggest, or the wounded man require, was shown by Naarveldt and his daughter, the latter of whom acted the part of nurse to perfection. Since his gentle physician prescribed tranquillity as the surest method of restoring health, much as Jophbert longed both to thank her for her kindness, and to make inquiries as to the arrangements of the Patriots, he was com-

pelled to forego the pleasure; and any attempt on his part to provoke conversation was met by a good-humoured reproof from Alfrude Naarveldt. Severe as his wound was, the natural strength of his constitution, and the care of his attendants, enabled him, after a confinement which, to his active mind, seemed eternal, to leave his bedroom; but no persuasion could induce the indefatigable Alfrude to permit her charge to venture out of doors until milder weather. Even though deprived of the power of directing his own movements, his dreary hours were much solaced by the thoughts of the constancy of his adored Bertha, whose gift was never absent from him; and by the visits of De Wencke, who never failed to make him aware of every movement of importance in the insurgents' army. The Prince of Orange also, who had made repeated inquiries after his health, paid him the honour of a visit, and passed glowing encomiums on his valour and skill, to which, he said, the safety of the remainder of the detachment was in a great measure owing. With a condescension remarkably gratifying to our hero, the Prince made him the confidant of many of his schemes. He trusted to the men of Haarlem to defend their city until the arrival of reinforcements, with whose assistance the siege might be raised. Any defeat sustained in Holland by the Spaniards would not only relieve Leyden, which he, as well as Naarveldt, considered would probably be the next object of their attack but would convince the people of Amsterdam and of the southern provinces that the enemy was anything but invincible. Could a spirit of unity animate the whole Netherlands, victory on a more decided scale might be expected; the consequence of which would be that the Queen of England and the minor Protestant states of Germany, whom prudence now prompted to preserve neutrality, would openly declare in their favour; and thus the power of Spain, which had so long tyrannised over civil and religious liberty, might be humbled. An unexpected visitor also made his appearance—no other than our vivacious friend Hophman—who, the reader may remember, had persisted in his intention to visit the town of Haarlem. His apparel, though much neater than that in which Jophbert made his acquaintance, was

still of a somewhat dubious character; but whatever changes his outer man might have undergone, fun and frolic still revelled in his clear grey eye. A hearty shake of the hand showed that his short absence had not rendered him unmindful of his former friend; and on hearing the narrow escape which Jophbert had met with, a tear nearly, very nearly, fell from the benevolent yet eccentric Hophman. In reply to our hero's inquiries of the means in which he had contrived to obtain entrance into Haarlem, and an unmolested egress therefrom, Hophman began:

"You must be aware, most valiant knight, that the will of man only acquires additional determination from the dangers of the enterprise he is about to undertake, and the arguments used to dissuade him from it. Thus was it with the admirable specimen of nature's handy-work, to whom you have the distinguished honour to listen. Pray do not wrong me by imagining that I reached Haarlem in my present attire! 'Quid-quid solum forti patria;' to prove my title to the appellation of a brave man, when among the Germans, I speak nothing but the purest Teutonic; with the Dutch, I converse only in their Anglo-Saxon dialect; to our English neighbours, I discourse in their version of the same dialect; the Portuguese, again, are favoured with as much of their Galician tongue as my habit of speaking the guttural German will permit me to adopt; lastly, for our Spanish friends, or foes, whichever you will, I reserve the purest Castilian. Of course, when it suits my purpose, I honour the patriotic whims of each of these several nations by donning their peculiar costume. Thus, you see, my unbounded philanthropy prompts me to drop all petty differences in the ennobling character of a citizen of the world. This laudable desire of offending no man's prejudices induced me to equip myself in the martial garb of these Spanish cavaliers, during the time my road lay through districts subject to their mild rule. If possible, rather than shock the feelings of our Dutch friends, on once more coming in contact with them, I am only Mynheer Hophman, a devoted friend to patriotism and religious liberty, which, in the presence of the Spaniards and their Walloon allies, I lost no opportunity of maligning. This conduct, most noble Jophbert, inconsistent though it may seem

to your bigoted views, is, in my humble opinion, a far better way of untethering the Gordian knot of difficulty than even cutting it with the sword, as the mad ardour of you shallow-pated knights-errant would suggest to you, and is, moreover, in exact accordance with the precept of 'being all things to all men.' Having thus, with the greatest modesty and conciseness, enlightened your understanding as to the theory of my habits, I will, with equal brevity, inform you that, for the first hour of my ride, in the whole of Holland no more devoted adherent of William of Orange could be found than your humble servant. Soon after, on beholding some who hold different opinions, politeness rendered it necessary for me to concur in their views. A slight adjustment of my attire, so as to conceal whatever may be said to betoken disloyalty, and make the most of anything which may show my aversion to it, takes place; and so Mynheer Hophman becomes Don Frederick Hoffa, who, for loyalty to King Philip of Spain, and attachment to the Roman Catholic religion, can seldom be equalled, and never surpassed. In this way I reached Haarlem in safety, made what observations I considered necessary as to the numbers of the besieged and their means of defence, and finally took my leave, with the good wishes of everybody, to inform the Prince of Orange of my remarks,—a resolution, I may do myself the justice to say, it is my full intention to act upon."

"And what may be the result of your wise observations, my philanthropic friend?" said Jophbert, unable to repress a smile at the garrulity of the laconic Hophman.

Before the person so addressed could give his answer, Alfrude Naarveldt entered the apartment, and began lecturing him, with assumed authority, on his indulging in such loud conversation before her patient, adding archly, she had hoped his medical skill would have convinced him of the imprudence of such a course. Hophman, with a shrug of the shoulders and a roguish leer of his merry eye, declared he never before heard of Esculapius being taken to task by Venus; but, concurring in the justice of her remarks, promised to adopt a lower tone in future. At which the fair intruder withdrew, and Hophman resumed the thread of his discourse; and after duly informing his auditor

of all he had seen and heard of the resources of the defenders of Haarlem, proceeded to matters of a more personal nature.

"Amongst other things which came under my notice, I did not fail to mark a personage who appeared to be following a similar occupation to myself. I saw the same man repeatedly in Haarlem, as also in conversation with the Spanish officers outside the walls, and, from the direction he took on most occasions, I should not be surprised if he had been favouring you Leydeners with his company. I wonder by what means he induced the guard at Haarlem to let him pass?"

"You were, I suppose, in Haarlem," said Jophbert, "when the news of the failure of our expedition reached that place. Had you seen aught of the person you mention previous to that time?"

"I saw nothing of him after that time; and my private impression is that you are greatly indebted to the benevolence of this same individual, whoever he may be, for the ill success which attended your enterprise."

For some time, Jophbert remained in deep thought as to who the person could be by whom the secret of their intentions had been thus betrayed to the enemy. It was evident that some system of espionage had been practised on their movements, and Hophman had seen nothing of the mysterious individual since that deplorable day. Might not the object of the spy be to bring evil on some particular person—perhaps himself? if otherwise, why had he so quickly discontinued his occupation? At present, he was utterly unable to solve the mystery, and he began to question Hophman as to the appearance of the supposed spy. From the answers obtained from the clear-sighted Hophman, it appeared to him anything but improbable that some agent of the Würmers was engaged to work his ruin. Desirous to divert his attention from so painful a subject, Jophbert inquired of Hophman how long it was his intention to remain at Leyden, suggesting that so active a mind as our friend's would require more exercise than that obtainable within the walls of a fortified town.

"I am not in the habit, my worthy friend, of putting my candlestick under a bushel, and depriving the world of my eminent services." [At this Jophbert could not refrain from

laughing]. "I therefore purpose to lend my brilliant talents in whatever quarter they may be needed; but first let me try my skill on your illustrious person."

We have already informed our readers that Jophbert has become, under the instructions of Master Haust, a tolerable adept in leechcraft; and great was his amusement to hear the *soi-disant* surgeon enter into a very vague discussion on fractures, dislocations, hæmorrhage, and inflammation; the result of which was to convince him that the knowledge of surgery possessed by his friend was somewhat homœopathic.

"I fear, good Master Hophman, your pretension to any skill in the healing art is no deeper than your profound knowledge of the black art,—in neither of which characters have you met with much success."

However Hophman might have felt disposed to have impugned this statement, he could see in Jophbert's face an expression which taught him that deception was of but little avail. Making a virtue of necessity, therefore, he said, in a mock dolorous tone:

"Little did I think, when I first met with the wandering Count of Staelburg, that I should have found him gifted with such singular penetration; but, to speak candidly, without any mental reservation, I will confess to you my birth, parentage, education, present position, and future prospects, to enable you to form a remote idea of my dignity."

Knowing that his discourse would occupy far more time than it was worth, Jophbert readily informed him that any such minute detail might be dispensed with.

"Be it known unto thee that, whatever respect you may bear for valour, I represent a principle which the proverb expressly informs us is greatly superior to it. I am none other than an itinerant impersonification of discretion. But, to drop these honeyed forms of speech, I may inform you that, as Briareus and others, claiming a sort of spiritual alias, possessed one name for use in the celestial regions on state occasions, and another to be employed in a less worthy capacity, so is it with me. When in my little heaven, I rejoice in the appellation of Godfrey, jester-in-chief to

his Imperial Majesty Maximilian the Second. In this present instance, the Emperor has been pleased to confer a lasting distinction on folly by appointing it to a post to which martial knights and sage counsellors are incompetent. Acting on the principle of employing one fool to watch another's movements, my imperial master has engaged me, the untitled fool, as private observer, on his behalf, of the proceedings of that prince of fools, Philip of Spain, who, I cannot deny, far excels me in the gentle art of folly. I have now obtained all the information which lies in my power, derived both from Dutch and Spanish sources, and I trust the effect of my report may be the active co-operation of the Emperor in the undertaking."

Words can scarcely express the astonishment of Jophbert on receiving this startling intelligence, which Hophman observing, greatly tended to amuse that laughter-loving personage.

"I intend to communicate all I know to the Prince of Orange, and hope to impart to him some valuable intelligence; after which I shall make all haste to present my report to the Emperor. It takes two wise men to make a fool, my worthy friend;* and should any one praise the wisdom of Philip of Spain in your absence, do me the honour of considering me the fortunate owner of at least twice the amount of sense with which bountiful nature hath gifted him. I generally succeed in imposing on those whom I meet; but, you may have noticed, this Nassau Dutchman was rather too discerning, even for me. Nevertheless, it is likely that my representations will do him far more good than harm. But I am losing time—fare thee well! Remember that, should difficulties assail you, you cannot do better than apply to so learned and able a counsellor as myself for advice and assistance. I promise you I will not lose sight of your interests."

Here Hophman, or Godfrey, rose to depart, but was induced to remain, in consequence of the appearance of a Reverend Divine, who had called to administer consolation to the mind of the invalid. His imitative genius here found a fit subject for mimicry, and

* "This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
And to do that well, craves a kind of wit."—*Twelfth Night*.

formed the liberal idea of entertaining his friends at court with a description of the preacher ; so that, with every show of respect, and under pretext of profiting by the pious exhortations of the zealous priest, he contrived to become an auditor. Master Kakophonloe, or Malavox, as the proprietor of that euphonious name was induced, by a laudable sympathy with the pronouncing organs of his fellow-mortals, to Latinise it, was a short man, of rather comfortable aspect, and, withal, possessing an eye which might have once betokened a boon companion. The excitement of the times had called him from comparative obscurity, and now, few of the eloquent orators who enlightened the world at large with their ideas, could compete with Marcus Malavox in the earnestness of his harangues. If we mistake not, he had caught sight of Jophbert on the occasion of his first promenade of the streets of Leyden, when he became seized with an ardent desire to number him among his flock. To do Malavox credit, we must inform the reader that, throughout Jophbert's indisposition, no opportunities were lost of impressing him with the truth of the doctrines held by the self-constituted priest. A few seconds passed in courteous inquiries for the bodily welfare of our hero ; after which the excited preacher, without any preliminary observations on the subject, plunged " in medias res," and exhorted his audience to renounce all communion with the bigoted Romish Church, which he proved, most satisfactorily to himself, to be the object of all the denunciations contained in Holy Writ. Fully prepared, though the good man was, to encounter any obstacle urged by the intended proselyte, the flesh was unable to keep pace with the ardour that animated him ; and long before he had exhausted his subject, he was compelled by physical prostration to desist. Nevertheless, he did not fail to inquire into the effect produced by his discourse on his auditors. Hophman, who was seldom disposed to dissent from any one, especially when his talent for satire might be indulged by acquiescence, and who cherished no great affection for the Romish Church, loudly applauded the sentiments of Master Malavox ; but Jophbert, whose views savoured more of consistency, with some freedom and ability entered into a discussion on the subject. At this our vivacious friend was

highly delighted, and, as the historian of the "Arabian Nights' Entertainments" hath it, laid up the whole scene in the archives of his capacious memory, for the amusement of such of the imperial courtiers who might concern themselves with the theological disputes of a rather ignorant Dutch preacher, and, as he thought, an equally ill-informed German noble. However, rather to his astonishment, he found that Jophbert was by far the more expert of the two, both in logic and information, and it appeared clear to Hophman that what little time the fiery Malavox would allow Jophbert to employ in argument, was used by the latter to good advantage.

The main fault of both Romanists and Protestants, at the time of our tale,—we speak, of course, of the more enlightened and tolerant of both parties,—consisted in the ignorance of each of the views and tenets of the other. Papist and Calvinist presumed to criticise works and opinions espoused by the opposite party, without having previously taken the pains to ascertain the substance and truth of them. Romanists knew nothing of the works of Luther or Calvin, and but little of those of Erasmus, which, nevertheless, (so far as they differed from their own ideas), they pronounced damnable and heretical; while Protestants enjoyed a blissful ignorance of the tenets of Origen, Chrysostom, or the bulls of the Pope, and even the writings of Thomas Aquinas, which, notwithstanding, underwent discussion and criticism. Under these circumstances, it is not to be wondered at if theological debates produced far more variance and ill-will between the contending parties than that which formerly separated them:

"He who complies against his will,
Is of his own opinion still."

And unless the inclination accompany conviction, little can be expected from a forced admission of any doctrine. Religious discord was one of the chief weaknesses of the Insurgents; and the politic, as well as tolerant, mind of the Prince of Orange could not effect a cordial union between them, much as would be the advantage to be derived from such a course. At the commencement of the arguments, Malavox though much in the dark as to

many of the real facts of the case, acquitted himself very tolerably of his task. As he became aware of the superiority of his opponent, much of his wonted confidence forsook him; and to many of the points raised by Jophbert, particularly on the manner in which the nonconformists got over the difficulty of taking upon themselves holy orders without any due consecration, the exercise of free will, and other particulars, the Dutchman was compelled, through ignorance, to resort to a species of casuistry, commonly known as "*petitio principii*." Having thus silenced, or at least out-argued, his antagonist, Jophbert, with becoming candour, acknowledged the many errors existing in the Romish hierarchy, —the celibacy of the clergy, the invocation of saints, the doctrines of supererogation and purgatory, and, lastly, the dominion usurped by the Pope over the bodies and souls of his votaries, even to the extent of releasing subjects from the obligation of an oath taken to a Protestant superior, on the ground that "*Hereticis fides non servanda est*." This last assumption of the papal see, and the barbarous idea of resorting to the terrors of persecution as a perfectly justifiable method of propagating the papal religion, would, he thought, be an ample excuse for a Romanist being found among the ranks of the Protestants, resisting the oppressive yoke of Spain, supported as it was by two such powerful engines as the Papal authority and the Inquisition. "God is love," continued he, "and any attempt to advance religion by a voluntary appeal to compulsion, must be contrary to the Divine nature." He further stated that, whatever might be the corruptions existing in the Romish establishment, he thought it rather the duty of every true friend of religion to endeavour to reform those corruptions, in preference to incurring the danger of schism; and that, in his case, any alteration of sentiment on his part would bear strong resemblance to an abandonment of conscientious principles from interested motives. Malavox, who was totally unprepared for the effusion of any such rational idea, from one whom he was given to consider as a bigoted adherent to the Romish creed, could make but few replies to Jophbert's remarks; and being, although an excitable, by no means a narrow-minded man, he was not sorry to obtain so clear an insight into the real

ideas of a large majority of the more tolerant Romanists. In reality, so completely was priestcraft assailed in its strongholds by the great reformer, Luther's masterly exposure of the defects existing, both in the theory and practice, the private principles and public doctrines, of papal Rome and its agents, that throughout such parts of Europe where the flame of the Reformation had spread,—with the exception of those wretched countries in which ignorance and superstition, supported by temporal authority, still predominated, conscious of internal weakness,—the ruling powers of the Romanists' cause feared to insist too much in their ill-gotten authority, lest a violent reaction should take place. In Germany, in particular, the wise and paternal rule of Maximilian II. had prevented Popery from resorting to those severe measures which many persons considered the only cause of extirpating heresy; thus reducing the powers of the priests to so low a degree that, even amongst their own co-religionists, they were unable to rule, as in those halcyon-days for them before rude but honest hands revealed, to the astonished eyes of the people, Popery *i. e.* the superstitious reverence paid to the head of the Church) stripped of its adornments, as Antichrist. This may serve to account for the knowledge possessed by Jophbert, both of scriptural and secular subjects, to which but few of the Catholic inhabitants of the Low Countries were permitted, by the intolerance of Philip of Spain and his myrmidons spiritual and temporal, to attain. Master Malavox, having at length, as he flattered himself, brought his disciple to a right frame of mind, and having obtained a corresponding degree of benefit himself, deferred the second part of his lecture for a more convenient season, when he might render himself more *au fait* with his subject. On his departure, Hophman warmly congratulated Jophbert on having obtained so complete a victory over the zealous Dutchman, whose words, pronounciation, and gestures he imitated admirably. But our hero could not altogether enter into his feelings; for, much as he was averse to leaving the pale of the Church, he could not shut his eyes to its errors.

Hophman being anxious to reach Vienna as quickly as possible, he now took leave of Jophbert, the good Naarveldt and

his daughter, and repaired to the Prince to make his report; his last advice to Jophbert being, to live as retired as possible, lest he should have more observers of his conduct than he needed.

It was some time before the young soldier was declared convalescent by his fair physician; and thoughts, which in active warfare escaped his mind, during his long confinement, took deep hold on him. He longed to see his friend Albert, and ascertain news from him of his lady-love, and of his friends at home. The position also of De Wencke, and the gentle Alfrude, carried his recollections forcibly back to the object of his affections; and sorely did he lament his inability to hold any communication with his absent friends. His anxiety was further increased by accounts of the appearance of the suspicious individual remarked by Hophman, who he thought must be Michael, or some other emissary of the Würmers, in which case he dreaded the result of any falsehood they might think fit to frame, to deceive Bertha and accomplish Würmer's designs. Assuming they succeeded in persuading the unfortunate girl of his death,—or, what might be worse, his infidelity,—he knew the aversion with which she regarded Würmer would prevent her becoming his bride. His fears were not only for himself: he dreaded the effect of any such information on Bertha. Much as these anxieties retarded his recovery, Alfrude Naarveldt, surmising that the indisposition lay more in the mind than the body, recommended a return to active duties as the only effectual remedy.

CHAPTER XV.

Touching how the Count succeeded in saving the Life of a Prisoner, and what News he had from Home.

PREVIOUS to Godfrey's departure homewards, he had amply fulfilled his promise of enlightening the Prince of Orange as to the progress of the Spaniards; and on our hero paying his respects to the Prince after his long illness, he heard great praise bestowed

upon his acquaintance. It might have been his representations that induced the Dutch leader to make such strenuous endeavours to intercept the convoys, and to adopt a more harassing warfare with the enemy. Much pains were taken with the cavalry, and great success attended the expeditions against straggling parties of the Spaniards. Staelburg's love of adventure, as well as the favour with which he was regarded in high quarters, procured him a participation in the honour to be derived from any such expeditions. The main fault of the Patriots—and which, under the circumstances of the case, is not much to be wondered at—was, that they were too prone to act upon the principle “*ab hoste doceri fas est*,” and, forgetting that an unarmed enemy ceases to be one, to give but little mercy to their prisoners.

Jophbert had frequent opportunity of using his influence with his companions for the preservation of the life of some unhappy prisoner whom their vengeance had doomed to destruction. On one occasion, information having been obtained of a rich supply of ammunition and provisions being forwarded to the besiegers of Haarlem, under the protection of a strong party consisting chiefly of Spanish and Walloon horse, every preparation was made for the interception of the convoy. What few cavalry were in readiness for action were despatched, each trooper carrying a foot-soldier behind him for that purpose; and both Jophbert and De Wenneke were amongst the number. Their intelligence proved correct; and scarcely had the arquebussiers prepared their weapons, ere the approach of the Spanish was announced. A well-directed volley from the pieces of the Dutch infantry greeted the enemy, and, profiting by the confusion produced on their antagonists, a gallant charge was made by the reiters. Unexpected though the attack was, a short time sufficed to rally the Royalists from their first panic, and both cavalry and infantry fought with a valour worthy of their old reputation. While the Insurgent horse were thus actively engaged, the infantry, who were under the immediate superintendence of De Wenneke, emerged from their ambush, and made a vigorous attack on the rear of the enemy, which was chiefly composed of Walloon levies. Imagining that the whole army of the Insurgents was upon them, these troops made a

precipitate flight from the field; and their example was not without some influence on the more resolute Spaniards, who ultimately made a retreat in tolerable order, abandoning their stores and money-chest to the victors. The loss on the part of the conquerors was inconsiderable; but the Royalists suffered severely from the first fire of the arquebussiers, and the subsequent attack of both horse and foot. Amongst the wounded was a Spanish officer, who (his charger having been slain) was left on the field. A party of the Dutch approached the spot where he lay, and having wrenched from his hand the sword with which he was attempting to defend himself, prepared to put him to death. Shocked at such barbarity, Jophbert hurried to the place, and earnestly implored the bloodthirsty Hollanders to relinquish their design. One of the most brutal of them sullenly observed that, being a German, Jophbert could never have witnessed the atrocities perpetrated by the Spaniards, and which they were then preparing to avenge on the object of his intercessions, who, scorning to use entreaties to save his life, had hitherto preserved a dignified silence, and who thanked Jophbert for his kindness, but begged him not to condescend to further expostulations with such unsoldier-like assassins. For his part, he added, he was at any time ready to meet a soldier's fate; and although he would have preferred a mortal blow at the hand of a gentleman in fair combat, it was not for him to choose the instruments or the manner of his death; but that he was at all times prepared to lay down his life for his king and country. His only request was that Jophbert would testify that he did not dishonour his name and lineage by any unbecoming fear. These honourable sentiments rendered our hero the more resolved to save the noble young Spaniard. Having persuaded De Wencke, who seemed much inclined to gratify the soldiers' desire for revenge, to use his influence over his followers, he at length had the pleasure of informing the wounded enemy that his life was no longer in danger. Nothing less than a considerable sum of money, however, would induce the captors to part with interest in their prisoner.

"Think not," said the Spaniard, "that my contempt of death prevents my feelings of gratitude to the preserver of my life.

Pedro de Valencia would be indeed unworthy of the name he bears, were he to be capable of such baseness. For my own sake, I care but little for whatever may befall me. But," he continued, his intelligent countenance glowing with animation, "there is one who prompts me to live, and in whose name, as well as my own, I cordially thank you. Perhaps you have never felt the bliss of knowing that another takes more thought of your safety than yourself?"

Touched by his prisoner's allusion, Jophbert could not deny that he had, in a great measure, partaken of the feelings mentioned by him.

"Then you can better sympathise with me," said Don Pedro, as, having given his parole to make no attempts to escape, he prepared to mount the steed of Staelburg, which the latter, with chivalrous courtesy, insisted on his accepting. The injury he sustained was from a severe blow on his helmet, dealt by one of the reiters, and the shock he experienced from the fall of his charger, from both of which contusions he was likely to recover speedily. As the captor walked by the side of the illustrious captive, much conversation passed between them; and Jophbert saw much to admire in the high-spirited Spaniard.

Their entrance into Leyden, bearing the spoils of the foe, excited as much joy as the previous one of some few of them, after their late disastrous encounter, did sorrow amongst the citizens. The captive Don was regarded as an object of much interest by the burghers; and great as was the prejudice existing against the Spaniards, few regretted that the life of so noble an enemy had been spared. Of course, the first duty of the victorious soldiers was to report their success to their superior officer, which they were not slow to do. The Prince praised the behaviour of each in no measured terms, and expressed himself particularly satisfied with Jophbert's conduct, especially his interference on behalf of Don Pedro. Both from natural inclination and policy, William was utterly averse to any unnecessary cruelty; and no such idea as the cold-blooded massacre of the defenceless ever entered his generous mind. He declared that, as Jophbert had purchased Don Pedro from his original captors, all benefit to be derived

from the capture belonged to him ; but, as commander-in-chief, he reserved to himself the consideration of the expediency of ransoming the prisoner, at least for the present. Perhaps, in making these stipulations, the Prince thought he might be able to procure the release of his eldest son, who was at that time in the hands of the Spaniards ; or it is not improbable that his only desire was to convince the Spaniards that it lay in his power to retaliate any barbarities committed upon the Dutch captives. Jophbert, who trusted to be able to restore the young noble to liberty at no very distant period, had no objection to make to this arrangement ; so, having received the most cordial proofs of his Prince's good-will, he took a respectful leave of him and retired. Don Pedro, having renewed his parole, was suffered to accompany him. On their way to the abode of the burgomaster Peter Van der Werf, the young Spaniard expressed the utmost astonishment at the noble conduct of the Prince, which, he observed, was utterly at variance with the character of him circulated by Philip's emissaries, who spared no pains to represent him as a bloodthirsty tyrant, giving no quarter to any one. Good Master Van der Werf readily undertook the capacity of host to the illustrious prisoner, and Jophbert repaired to the dwelling of Mynheer Naarveldt to assure him of his safety. Great was the joy of the patriotic citizen on hearing of the success which attended the expedition, and repeatedly did he insist on hearing every particular of the exploit.

In the evening, the young soldier, with whom every species of temporary excitement was attended with a corresponding depression of spirits, repaired to the ramparts of the town, to indulge the gloomy suggestions of his mind in quietness. So lost was he in reflections of the fate of her he loved, and the unscrupulous means likely to be practised by the relentless Würmer towards her, that he entirely lost sight of all the objects around him. How long this fit of abstraction might have lasted, it is difficult to say, had it not been terminated in a somewhat abrupt manner. The promenade of the love-sick adventurer adjoined a wall in course of erection, and which had attained the height of nearly five feet, when, slowly pacing near this incomplete fortification,

he was suddenly roused from his reverie by a noise, as if from the descent of a falling body. Turning his attention to the place, he became aware of the presence of a man, who must have made a leap over the wall in question. The stranger for the first time found his movements perceived, and, with ready courtesy, apologised to our hero for having caused such an intrusion upon his serenity. The shades of evening, which were now falling thick around, prevented Jophbert from seeing the features of the speaker, but the voice seemed familiar to him. He, however, cautiously informed the stranger that his sudden appearance had in no wise disconcerted him, and offered, as he appeared to be unacquainted with the locality, to act as his guide. A hearty laugh was the first answer to this polite proposal; after which, in a rich, full voice, the unknown added: "As I live, a short absence works wondrous changes! I had thought the Count of Staelburg would have recognised his old friend Albert, even in Holland; but I suppose the thick fogs of this swampy country have rendered my noble friend less acute than formerly."

A warm pressure of the hand, and a volume of apologies, assured the bold outlaw that Jophbert's conduct was quite the result of accident.

"Was it not fortunate that I so quickly discovered you? Had I made a tour of the town, inquiring for you, it is probable, not only should I have failed in meeting with you under any *nom de guerre* you may adopt, but perhaps in the morning you might have had the pleasure of seeing your old acquaintance suspended by his neck from the battlements, with the honours of war, as a spy."

"I assure you," said Jophbert, "you were one of the last objects of my thoughts at the time when you made your appearance in such a startling manner. To tell you the truth, I was unable to prevent my mind rambling homewards, and great was my desire to ascertain some tidings of my absent friends."

"And their anxieties for your welfare are equally great. In fact, the chief object of my visit was to ascertain whether you were still in existence, for reports were industriously circulated that you had fallen in an engagement with the enemy. You may suppose what pain such a report produced on the lady Bertha."

"It is indeed a great comfort, Albert, that 'out of sight out of mind' is not always the case; but, pray, tell me by what means any such news reached you."

"Your friend's page, Karl, was the first person who told me aught of it; and from him I learnt that some warrior, returning from the Netherlands, had informed the Baron of Würmer of the circumstance."

"That story seems to me somewhat improbable. In the first place, I hold him no true warrior who would consort with the Würmers. A man is known by the company he keeps, and the Baron of Würmer is not the associate a martial knight would choose. Moreover, I am inclined to think his information was derived from a very different source. An emissary of Würmer a renowned warrior! Pshaw!" And he laughed till the walls rang with his satirical mirth. "But I would fain know what effect the tale had upon the lady Bertha."

"What might be expected from her generous disposition," said Albert. "She answered her father, when he informed her of it, that had any such evil befallen you, she had no doubt you died with your face to the foe, as a German noble should die; or otherwise that you still lived to be an object of dread to your enemies. In the former case, she preferred to consider herself as the bride of the illustrious dead than the betrothed of one so lost to every sense of honour as Würmer; while, in the latter, she doubted not soon to hear good tidings of you. In either case, she persisted in her refusal to receive any addresses from your rival."

"Admirable girl!" said Staelburg, kissing affectionately the last token of affection bestowed upon him. "Much do I fear that her constancy may expose her to danger."

"So you would indeed say, were I to inform you of Würmer's last proposal," replied the outlaw.

"The wretch! what had he the audacity to suggest?" said, or rather screamed, the excited hero.

"Be more composed, and you shall know all. Finding, as I have understood, that nothing he could urge would induce Bertha to accept his suit, he demanded that, if within six months he

should fail in overcoming her objections to him, the convent should be her doom!"

"False traitor! But surely the Baron agreed to no such demand?"

"I regret to say that Würmer obtained from him an unwilling consent, and that in a few more days her doom will be sealed."

"Can nothing be done to save her?" said Jophbert, in an agony of despair. "Would that nothing prevented me from interposing! Nay, whatever may betide, I will incur the severest displeasure of the Margrave, and even the Emperor, rather than let Würmer meet with such success!"

Albert remained for some time musing; but at length he observed, in a more joyous tone: "A more mad piece of folly than your interference could scarcely be conceived, my deeply injured friend. Your enemies would procure, if possible, an immediate confiscation of your estates, and whatever resolution you might show, could avail you but little. Difficult it may be to extricate your beloved one from peril; but still it is not impossible. I am inclined to hope that, by some dexterity on my part, the thing may be accomplished. Ask no questions, but trust all in my hands; and, at the risk of my life, I will overreach this scheming Würmer. My plan is a bold one: give me time to put it into execution, and I pledge you my word, which has never yet been broken, the lady Bertha shall be restored to you unharmed in life, limb, and honour; or Albert the brigand shall not live to endure your reproaches. Have you full confidence in me?"

"My honour, and that of her I love, could not be reposed in more trusty hands. I ask you no questions. Rather, indeed, for her own sake would I hear of the death of the high-spirited Bertha, than that she were in the power of the unprincipled Würmer!"

"Thanks for your confidence," said Albert. "None who have trusted to me have regretted so doing. But let me hear what ground there was for the report of your death."

Jophbert proceeded to inform him of the severe wound he had received, and the length of time he had been confined from its

effects. Little indeed, he observed, were the pains he suffered, compared to those inflicted on the sensitive Bertha by the unfeeling report. Think you," he continued, "that in reality the tale found any credence with her?"

"I think not; but it is difficult to say. At any rate, she attired herself in mourning, as if a widow; but, it appears, the depth of her emotion was known only to herself."

"Accursed be my folly in urging William of Hardfels to spare Würmer's life, when it lay in his power to have taken it! Such reprobates have no sense of gratitude!"

"Without doubt, Justice will yet claim her own, and a disgraceful death awaits him, his spurs having been first hacked off by the executioner."

"But," remarked our hero, "so entirely are my thoughts taken up with my own affairs, that I had almost forgotten to inquire of your own safety. I trust your wound is now fully healed."

"Thanks to the care of your worthy housekeeper, Kaisa, in a few days after your departure I was enabled to resume my original pursuits. No invalid could give such a leap as you have seen."

"And what course does the Baron of Hardfels adopt with regard to the management of my property, which he undertook?"

"From what I can judge, he appears to pay great attention to it. I have observed either father or son frequently engaged in altering and improving the estate. But besides this, however, I have news of interest to you. Here," said he, producing a scrap of paper, "do you not remember, but a short time before your departure, my making search on the body of that ruffian I had the good fortune to despatch? Among the papers in his possession—some of which I could not understand—I happened to find out one of some importance. As it is too dark for you to read it, I will only inform you it is a document securing the payment of seven hundred crowns, by Würmer, to my old acquaintance Ruffo, on proof of your death by his hand; and the contemptible sum of two hundred crowns on his accomplishing my destruction. You see what a difference there is between a count and an outlaw!"

Jophbert started with astonishment at so sudden a solution of his doubts as to the brigands' motives in attacking him.

"Could we not," said he, with enthusiasm, "bring the career of Würmer to a close? Would not that document ensure his destruction? I have been busily compiling proofs of his fraud towards his neighbours; and I think, with the additional proofs furnished by this paper, we might succeed."

"Be not too fast," said Albert; "you forget that to kill a man out of the protection of the laws is no murder. Certainly there is more hope that we might make it an offence of some magnitude against you; but my advice to you is, not to be too precipitate on the subject. To return to Vienna would excite the jealousy of the Margrave, and Würmer would protest against the admission of my evidence, without which you could do nothing. I doubt not that ere long Würmer's villany will be detected, and meet its reward. Meanwhile, I will take all necessary steps for the frustration of his plans. The document had better remain in my custody,—all due care will be taken of it. With regard to the defeat of his schemes for placing the lady Bertha in a convent, is there no love-token you could trust me with, as a proof of your concurrence in my design?"

With some hesitation, Jophbert removed from his neck the precious locket Bertha had given him, and handed it to his friend, who expressed himself well satisfied with such a credential.

As it was growing late, Jophbert pressed the outlaw to accompany him to his quarters; but, to his surprise, all entreaties failed; and Albert, saying that to accomplish his purpose no time should be lost, warmly wrung his friend's hand, promised to pay him another visit before long, if possible, and, descending the city-wall, was soon lost to his sight.

Albert's revelations produced varied emotions in the mind of our hero. Sincerely did he regret the grief the news of his death must have occasioned to his betrothed; but he trusted that, having satisfied themselves of such a fact, the Würmers would cease to keep so vigilant a watch over him. In this, however, he was deceived: Würmer was not so easily persuaded of the reality of

so joyful a riddance, and his agents resumed their operations stealthily, but surely.

Jophbert, however, spent a pleasant evening with Mynheer Naarveldt, who, delighted with the events of the day, was in unwonted good humour; and if he did not give vent to "*ampullus et sesquipedalia verba*," it was more in consequence of his natural taciturnity, than any want of hilarity. Jophbert, also, was in better spirits than he had possessed for some time, and his kind friends were much gratified with the change which had come over him.

CHAPTER XVI.

Albert's Mystery.

THE brigand said right: few who trusted to his honour regretted having done so. However he might act as a sinking-fund to carry away the surplus capital of the Emperor's liege subjects, treachery was a fault which could not be imputed to him; and those who, for an adequate consideration, had obtained a free passport, were never rated for the relief of the forest chieftain during its continuance. The Earl of Derby says, with great justice, that "*society is composed of compromises*." Albert composed a very wholesome compromise between the romantic cavalier and the matter-of-fact bandit. He was not kept long in suspense for the execution of his scheme: the time had now arrived for Bertha of Hardfels to become either the bride of the Baron of Würmer, or an inmate of the Convent of our Lady at Mentz.

On the day appointed, Würmer failed not to appear at Hardfel's Castle, to demand of its proprietor the fulfilment of his promise. He found Hardfels, as he had ever known him, prepared to carry his engagements into execution. The latter did not deny that, notwithstanding all his suggestions,—nay, solicitations,—Bertha remained as inexorable as ever. "You remember the alternative!" Würmer exclaimed. "The girl is to be either mine or

the Church's! You, are, I suppose, in a position to act upon your word?"

The diabolical manner in which these unfeeling remarks were uttered was not lost upon Hardfels, who replied, in a tone of suppressed agony, "Why do you distrust me, Baron of Würmer? I am prepared. I ask not for an extension of the time originally granted, because not only do I know how useless it is to try to move you to pity, but because I am well aware no good could arise from any such course. You are at perfect liberty to send your servants here, if you wish it, to escort my unhappy daughter to her destination."

Würmer, who seldom acted without due deliberation, attentively considered the matter; but, however much he might like to reverse the duties of knight-errant, and be the instrument of woe, instead of weal, to the daughter of Eve who had offended him, he resolved, for many reasons, to let others perform that duty. He therefore replied:

"I am glad to hear you converse so reasonably: it is of no use to apply for further time. To the convent your daughter shall go. I have thought well over your last proposal; but as I presume you are aware that I am not disposed to be trifled with, I leave you to make all necessary arrangements. Woe be to you if I find you fail! Remember, the transaction is not closed until Bertha makes her profession; so, should any false play be practised, I may not be the victim of it."

"Be it so!" said Hardfels, heaving a deep-drawn sigh. "By to-morrow eve the Nunnery of the Virgin at Mentz shall have one more sister within its walls."

"So far so good," said Würmer, with an ironical smile. "Let me congratulate you, Baron of Hardfels, on making so worthy an offering to holy Mother Church. Without doubt, the young lady, who commences life with arrogance towards me, and with undutiful feelings toward you, will be canonised for her exemplary piety!"

The spirit of the elder Baron was roused by this cruel sarcasm; but, from prudential motives, he repressed his anger. "Since your mission is completed, you can have no further need

of my presence," said he, in a tone of assumed composure. "Perhaps, though, you would like to see your victim before her sacrifice?—for such, indeed, is it."

"No, I will not intrude upon her vigils. No doubt, as the affianced bride of the Church, she is telling her beads, and performing other offices of devotion. Fare thee well!"

Whatever latent suspicion Würmer might have had of Hardfels' good faith, the conduct of the latter was quite sufficient to remove. He was resolved to redeem his word, and no Roman father could display more apparent stoicism than did the unhappy lord. We will not dwell upon the parting between father and daughter. The miseries endured by Hardfels were of that class which play upon the mind, without any means of utterance. Great was his inward emotion—it was indeed *αγων μεγας πληρης στηναγμων ουδε δα κρυων κενος*—to prevail upon himself in private to act his part in public. Such, nevertheless, was his habitual self-control, that the statesman and politician prevailed over the parent and the man. The only evidence of his feelings was the paleness of his cheek and the despondency of his bearing, which no artifice could conceal. Bertha, who must have felt the approaching separation very deeply, contrived,—perhaps out of kindness for her unhappy father, or from a pride which scorned to let others know the iron which entered into her soul,—to preserve an appearance of calmness. Previous to her departure, Father Clement had given her much excellent advice, in which he stated that, although a life of seclusion was neither in accordance with his tastes nor the precepts of the Bible, yet, as a daughter, she had no alternative but to submit with resignation to the wishes of her father, who, he felt convinced, would not act with unnecessary severity towards her. Father Clement was far more enlightened than the majority of his order: his strong mind plainly discerned error in the Romish religion; but, as an ordained priest of the establishment, he had a great aversion to schism. Of too retiring a nature to be a zealous reformer, it is probable more good was accomplished in his present position than he might have done had he essayed to tread in the footsteps of the great Luther. He could not recommend to his charge the conventual

life as one of greater piety or happiness than a more active career. Well did he know that the "pride which apes humility" was as active an agent in procuring devotees as any other feeling. He nevertheless argued upon better grounds,—filial duty and self-denial. He urged that, however mistaken zeal might be, the Great Shepherd of Israel would not reject her living sacrifice, if tendered with becoming humility and faith.

The last farewell, affectionate though constrained, had taken place ; and, amidst the tears of her old attendants and brother, the future nun, escorted by a small body of retainers, headed by the steward of the house, left her once happy home for an unknown future. William of Hardfels had particularly requested his father to intrust him with the sad office of delivering his sister into the hands of the superior of the establishment. The Baron, who alone had kept a dry eye throughout the whole scene, probably thinking such a course would be distasteful to Würmer, peremptorily declined.

Slowly did the sorrowful *cortège* wend its way along the rugged road leading to Mentz ; and although some of the retainers had hoped a rescue would have been attempted by the partizans of the Count of Staelburg, nothing occurred to break the monotony of the transaction ; and Karl, who was of the party, thought nothing now remained for him but to deliver up his miserable mistress to the lady superior, and return. At some little distance from Mentz, on ascending an eminence, a troop of mounted retainers might be seen approaching them. Although the movements of the approaching band were, if possible, less speedy than their own, it was not long ere a junction was effected. The second party were mounted on sleek mules, comfortably, though not gaudily, caparisoned, and at their head rode a man of venerable appearance, who, from his silver locks and the red cross which, in common with his followers, he wore on his breast, might be taken for the major-domo of the nunnery. With a voice rather impaired by age, the leader of the conventual party inquired whether he was not accosting the servants of the Baron of Hardfels, who were escorting their young mistress to the Nunnery of our Lady at Mentz.

The steward of Hardfels politely answered that such was the case, and demanded by what authority the inquiry was made.

The first speaker informed him that the lady abbess of Mentz, having every regard to the rank of the illustrious lady, had commissioned the band under his orders to conduct her to her future home, since, he remarked, it was in violation of the etiquette of their establishment for secular retainers to intrude upon the demesnes of the convent.

A far-seeing man was the steward of Hardfels, and a searching glance did he bestow upon the major-domo; but in the demure looks of the myrmidons of the Church he saw no grounds for suspicion. He therefore demanded a sight of the written authority under which the latter acted, and a certificate of the safe delivery of the damsel, which having been done to his satisfaction, the Baron's party, with heavy hearts, returned homewards.

One of her new attendants, with solemn step, led the ambling palfrey which bore the downcast Bertha; and for some time an ominous silence was preserved. The road taken by the party appeared new to our heroine; for, often as she had ridden to Mentz, she never remembered having taken the present way. By degrees, the whole party quickened their pace, and the pious retainer, who formerly held her bridle-rein, having resumed his seat in the saddle, urged his spirited mule to keep up with the fleet steed which Bertha rode. The majority of the party, including their aged leader, at length indulged in a far more animated conversation than might have been expected from their character and years. Having ridden at a rapid rate for some time, the major-domo drew rein at a snug little hostelrie, and requested refreshment for man and beast. At first a great distance was observed between mine host and the leader of the party; but of a sudden this coldness vanished, and having requested the boniface to put a private room at the disposal of the young lady, and to spare no pains to ensure her comfort during the short time the rules of the establishment permitted them to rest, the portly personage, with his company, withdrew. The injunction was promptly obeyed, and the host's wife, a dame "fat, fair, and forty," obsequiously assisted Bertha to remove her travelling gear. The apartment provided

for her was immediately over the common room, and, woe be to us that we should have to record it! instead of long graces and pious hymns on the part of the escort, she heard nothing but the clatter of knives and dishes, and the sound of wassailry. Her previous suspicions were somewhat increased on finding the self-denying servants of the Church thus bent on attending to the wants of the creature. On inquiring of her new *femme de chambre* the distance between her present habitation and Mentz, she was extremely surprised to ascertain she was journeying in a very different direction. An elegant repast was set before her, of which she ate but little; after which she received a courteous intimation that her guides were prepared to resume their journey. In a few seconds she was ready to accompany them. On producing her purse, to pay for the accommodation of herself and attendants, all offers of remuneration were firmly but respectfully declined, the hostess stating that the leader of the retainers was an old acquaintance, and a frequent visitor at the hostelrie. Totally unable to comprehend the mystery, our heroine reluctantly yielded the point, and was speedily at the court of the inn, awaiting her attendants.

Neither major-domo nor red-crossed sons of the Church presented themselves; but, in their stead, Bertha beheld a band of foresters, clad in the garb of their order. Her first impression was, that her unknighly suitor had made use of this artifice to get her into his power, and a violent fit of trembling came over her. The manly face of the foresters alone would, to a less timid person, be a sufficient guarantee of their honesty; but, to dispel her doubts, the person who had hitherto acted the part of major-domo, seeing the effect the metamorphosis had had upon his fair charge, with a respectful doff of his hat, assured her that she had nothing to fear. He informed her that the motives of himself and band were, at any risk to themselves, to save her from the threatening danger, and added that the Count of Staelburg had given his sanction to the means he was practising, which, he trusted, would amply satisfy her that their intentions were honourable. A production of her locket, and an explanation of the means by which it was obtained, convinced Bertha of the truth of the forester's statement.

It is a wise saying, "of two evils always choose the least;" and Bertha, with as much presence of mind as excitement, would have reflected that, were she to insist on being conducted to the nunnery, she would not be secure from the persecutions of the Baron of Würmer; whereas, in her present position, she had the word of one of a class famous for veracity, that no harm should happen to her. Besides, the handsome forester had mentioned the name of Staelburg, and had shown her the gage of affection which she had given to her lover before his departure, the very sight of which was cheering; so that it did not seem improbable to her ardent mind that the whole affair might be planned by the young Count to rescue her from Würmer. She therefore, with an air of confidence, expressed herself perfectly satisfied with his assurances, and declared her willingness to accompany him. The forester, in whom no doubt the reader will recognise our friend Albert, forthwith issued orders to his men to mount, on which the hardy outlaws appeared bestriding steeds which would have done no discredit to the Emperor of Germany. As to the means by which they became possessed of them, it is best "to ask no questions, for conscience' sake." The order of march was to forward all the attendants, with the exception of two, into an advance guard, while the others brought up the rear. Albert himself, as in politeness bound, left not the side of his beautiful charge. The latter, too full of her own thoughts, did not presume to address her deliverer; for we confess, at the risk of sinking our heroine in the estimation of our fair readers, it was in such a light she regarded Albert.

"It may be a matter of some gratification to you," said Albert, "to know that the valiant Count of Staelburg, about whom false reports were so widely circulated, is not only alive, but in the enjoyment of good health."

"I thank you for being the messenger of such good news; but when and how did you see him, Sir Forester?" said Bertha, with whom the frank, unassuming manner of the outlaw was exercising influence.

"I am known as Albert the Brigand," said our friend; "and the last occasion of my seeing that mirror of chivalry, the Count

of Staelburg, was within the walls of Leyden, some few days since. The only obstacle to his happiness was the thought of one he left behind."

A blush came over the pale cheek of Bertha, as she faintly answered: "Such is good news, indeed!"

Albert had expected some violent demonstration of feeling at the sound of his formidable name; but in this he was mistaken. Both William of Hardfels and Staelburg himself had spoken of him in her presence in terms of admiration; and, indeed, had it been otherwise, the excited state of mind in which she then was would have prompted her to take any course to elude Würmer, whose name had greater terrors for her than that of Albert.

On further inquiries, she learned from Albert the extent of the evil that had befallen her lover, and the kind friends to whom he was in a great measure indebted for his restoration to health. We know not whether the tidings of Alfrude Naarveldt's attention to the wounded soldier excited, in a greater degree, her jealousy (not of the gentle Dutch girl herself, but of the happiness of attending in sickness upon him she cherished in health), or her admiration and esteem of her to whom she owed so much.

Albert, although no connoisseur of forms and ceremonies, was by no means wanting in that native politeness which was, at that period the ruling principle of the age; and for some time his agreeable conversation relieved the monotony of the way.

After a while, as if rousing herself from a sudden forgetfulness, Bertha demanded of her new acquaintance whither it was his intention to conduct her.

"By your gracious permission, lady, I propose leaving you to the care of some relations of my own, who are engaged in the profitable occupation of merchants at Hamburg. You will find my kinsman, Christopher Splucher, a man of strict integrity and pleasing manners; and his good wife will, I am sure, on learning the particulars of the case, spare no pains to promote your welfare."

"And my poor father!" said the kind-hearted girl; "what will he think, when he hears of my adventure? I fear it will bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave."

"I trust," said Albert, "that ere long he may be persuaded

to procure the recal of the exiled Count to his native country, when I cannot but hope means may be found to free your father from the thralldom now exercised over him. Nay," continued he, musingly, "perhaps it would be as well if he were to imagine that your death had taken place: any such rumour might mislead the Würmers; and if things came to a crisis, I might contrive to enlighten the Baron of Hardfels as to the real facts of the case. The present system of things cannot last long. The crimes of the Würmers must be exposed before the world is much older."

The young beauty turned her eyes tearfully towards him, as he spoke of inflicting so much pain on one who, however sternly he might have acted, had never ceased to be an object of her dearest affection. But as Albert appeared in no manner to repent of his determination, the words in which she had intended to remonstrate against such a course died upon her lips.

Their track now laid by the banks of one of those beautiful little rivers which, with their elegant windings and numberless cascades, prove so great an ornament to that land of beauty, Germany. Here Albert courteously proposed that Bertha should leave her hood, or some other article of dress of which she could divest herself, by the banks of the stream; so that, should any pursuit be undertaken, some seeming evidence of her death might meet the eyes of the pursuers.

With great reluctance was his suggestion complied with, and, with her own fair hands, the hood to which we have alluded was placed by Bertha in such a position that it might seem that its late owner had taken refuge from her sorrows in that joyous, ever-flowing river.

Here Albert, having taken every precaution to carry out his stratagem, and give effect to the supposition that the destined nun had either committed suicide, or been precipitated to the bottom of the stream, recalled the leading division of his men; and, with many expressions of gratitude for their fidelity, dismissed them to their accustomed haunts until his return from Hamburg.

Thus journeying together, the bold outlaw and his delicate charge by successive stages reached their destination, when Albert,

in a few words, revealed to Splucher so much as appeared necessary of the plot. The honest merchant, who was under some obligations to his kinsmen for sundry presents of venison and other kindnesses, was right glad to have it in his power to evince his sense of them; and, with the warm concurrence of his good dame, the fair scion of the aristocracy was installed in their family as Adelaide Splucher, their orphan niece.

At the return of the escorting party, the Baron of Hardfels, on seeing the document delivered to the steward, had no doubt of its authenticity. Since correspondence by letter was prohibited between novices and their friends, for some time the Baron was fully persuaded that Bertha had taken the white veil.

Würmer, however, had received intimation from his amiable aunt, the abbess of the nunnery, that no such novice as mentioned by him had arrived. A few weeks after the completion of Albert's design, he presented himself at Hardfels' Castle, to reproach its owner with breach of faith: "How, now!" said he, addressing the Baron; "in spite of my warning to you, do you think to deceive me by so shallow a pretence? I am well aware no daughter of yours reached Mentz. Tell me where you have concealed her, and at length act up to your word, or your treachery may bring you into trouble."

"Pray, on what grounds do you assume so violent a tone?" said Hardfels, with dignity. "Do you think me capable of dealing deceitfully with you? My unfortunate daughter was duly given over into the hands of the servants of the convent; and I hold the acknowledgment delivered by them."

A close perusal of the document was taken by Würmer; he knew not by whom it could be forged, but thought it not unlikely that Ruffo, by way of getting him into his power, had contrived and executed the scheme. For once his clear head failed to unravel the mystery. "Hardfels," said he, "if this wretched forgery has deceived you, you are made of different materials than I imagined. It is evident, if you are not a party to the plot, some robber or other has possession of the lady, hoping to extort money from you for her recovery. My recommendation to you is, if you have any time to spare, to get into your saddle at

once, and let us make inquiries as to the road taken by the party."

Hardfels, almost thunderstruck by Würmer's astounding intelligence, acted upon his suggestion; and having made all inquiries from Karl as to the appearance of the persons who had relieved them of their charge, set out to ascertain of the peasantry residing near the road what they knew of so mysterious an occurrence. From intelligence derived from one or other, the fugitives were traced to the place of the dispersion of Albert's gang. After this point Hardfels could elicit nothing. Much disconcerted, he accompanied Würmer homewards, the latter being too much infuriated with the stratagem played upon him to indulge in much conversation. An old labourer making his appearance, they inquired of him if he knew anything of the matter. The man mentioned having found the hood of a lady near the river, and added his opinion that the owner of it had been murdered, and thrown into the stream. In confirmation of his statement he produced the article in question from an adjacent cottage.

Vastly different was the effect produced by this disclosure on the two nobles. Hardfels, although prepared for the worst, was well-nigh overwhelmed with grief at so tragic an event; while Würmer, though preserving an appearance of sorrow, could not but regard the circumstance, if true, as a just retribution on all who had incurred his resentment. In truth, Würmer was at some loss to decide upon his course of action. He saw before him the means of ruining Hardfels,—if, indeed, his hold upon him were as powerful as he represented it to be. The loss of Bertha would be a primary affliction, both to him and William, the former of whom he trusted to destroy "*secundum artem*," if it suited his purpose; and the latter he doubted not to remove by some source or other. As for Staelburg, he almost believed in Michael's report that he had fallen in action. Pausing amidst so many advantages, Würmer decided to let the matter rest until he should have sufficient time to mature his schemes, and ascertain if the catastrophe mentioned had really taken place.

On their return to Hardfels, due orders were given for the

river to be dragged; but for many days nothing was found. After some time, at a great distance from the place where lay the hood, a body was discovered, the features of which could not be recognised. The disconsolate father, little doubting that the corpse was that of his beloved daughter, carried by the force of the current from its original place, caused it to be interred with becoming solemnity. After the sad ceremony had been performed, the Baron of Hardfels sought, in the maze of state business, to exclude the sorrow which was preying upon his heart. William of Hardfels, however, received a gentle hint from Albert that there was strong probability of his sister still living, but could obtain no further intelligence. Compassionating her father's affliction, he did not fail to suggest the fact to him; and as a drowning man catches at a straw, so did the unhappy father cling with the utmost tenacity to the fond hope that his daughter might ultimately be restored to him.

CHAPTER XVII.

Treating, amongst other Matters, of the Siege of Leyden.

JOPHBERT was not long without an opportunity of procuring the release of his prisoner. The Prince of Orange, on his next interview, in admiration of his gallantry, promised him whatever boon it might be in the Prince's power to grant. To the surprise of the Patriot general, who expected nothing less than an application for some promotion, Jophbert requested only that Don Pedro might, if consistent with his good pleasure, be set at liberty. Although William had hoped, by his retention, to have derived some advantage to the Patriot cause, in procuring either the freedom of, or at least some mercy to, those of the Dutch whom the Spaniards might have taken,—so nice a regard had he for his word, and withal so high an appreciation of the generosity of the request, that, without any appearance of reluctance, he declared that thenceforth Don Pedro was a free man, on the simple con-

dition of not again bearing arms against the States. This condition Jophbert readily undertook to be performed, and went with all speed to inform his late captive of the change which had come over his circumstances. Fervent were the young Spaniard's protestations of gratitude, and many were his promises to exercise what influence he might have over the Spanish leaders to mitigate the sufferings of the Dutch prisoners.

"Now," he added, "there is no obstacle to my union with Donna Maria!"

So saying, he produced a miniature, and displayed the features of his inamorata to his generous captor. It was not to be wondered at if a restoration to liberty were a source of joy to the young cavalier. Jophbert, on beholding the miniature, could scarce repress a tear, as he thought of the difference existing between his position and that of the Spaniard.

The latter observed his emotion, and remarked: "I hope that he to whom I owe both life and liberty, may ere long have the pleasure of beholding her who reigns in his heart otherwise than in miniature."

Jophbert could not help, in secret, joining warmly in his friend's wish, as he thought of the many difficulties which beset him.

"Well," said Don Pedro, "should you happen to be in sunny Spain at the time of my nuptials, I bid you cordially to the marriage feast; and I am sure the bride will be no less glad to see you."

"I thank you," said Jophbert; "but war is now my mistress, and much as I might like to witness your happiness, I feel my duty lies in another direction."

"It is out of my power to return your compliment, by taking you my prisoner, and making you by force a guest at our bridal feast; but should the fortune of war frown on you, I hope to requite your kindness."

A hearty embrace corroborated the expressions of gratitude on the part of the warm-hearted Spaniard; and Jophbert had the satisfaction of seeing him make what few preparations were necessary, and set out furnished with a safe conduct homewards.

He, however, first insisted on returning all moneys expended by Jophbert on his behalf.

"Liberty! liberty! from peasant to peer, what a wide empire is thine! How does the heart of the captive leap within him, however mild his captivity, on being once more under thy gentle sway!" So thought our hero, as, with a graceful wave of the hand, Don Pedro started on his joyous expedition.

Men, on the whole, lose but little by a well-tempered generosity. William of Orange was no loser in permitting the illustrious prisoner to depart; his kindness was amply repaid by the exertions of the object of his liberality on behalf of those unfortunate persons whom the fanatical bigotry of Spain so cruelly oppressed.

Having thus disposed of Don Pedro, Jophbert returned to his leader, to inform him of the gratitude of the young noble for his kindness.

"Nay, nay, Jophbert!" said the honourable William; "he owes me nothing. It is you to whom he owes his liberty. I had indeed almost expected some other request. It had been my opinion that, in the destruction of the Greek and Roman empires, the principles practised by Aristides, Quintus Curtius, and Regulus, had been well-nigh extinguished; but your conduct is sufficient to reconcile me, if so inclined, to the Pythagorean theory, in the belief that the soul of one of those venerable heroes of antiquity dwells in your body. I see," he added, "that the trusty blade you carry has seen its best days. Accept this, as a small token of my regard; in the words of the Roman emperor, use it in my service so long as I remain faithful to the State, and ever thereafter against me." With these words, he disengaged his finely tempered Toledo sword from his side, and affixed it, with his own hands, to the belt of the delighted Jophbert, who could scarcely find words of thanks for the distinguished honour conferred upon him.

"You will find it a true companion. I ever considered it the only production of Spain noted for its fidelity. I trust it in good hands, and long may it continue to be wielded for the good of the Netherlands!"

Here Jophbert kissed his hand, and withdrew to display his new decoration to De Wencke, who bestowed upon it his unqualified admiration.

During this time, notwithstanding the heroism displayed by the Dutch, little was done towards the liberation of their country. For a long time did the gallant defenders of Haarlem maintain their town, in opposition to all the attempts of Frederick of Toledo and his veterans to gain possession of it. Unfortunately for the Patriots, the Count de Bossut had, with great perseverance, equipped a numerous fleet at Amsterdam and elsewhere, which enabled him to make himself master of the Sparen, after a sanguinary engagement with the fleet of the Protestants, and thus cut off all supplies forwarded to the town by water. The courage of the men of Haarlem sunk not with these reverses. Repeated sallies were made, in some of which important advantages were obtained. But such advantages were but temporary: the skill and perseverance of the enemy rendered the introduction of supplies more and more difficult, and famine began to manifest itself within the ill-fated town. All sorts of garbage was sought for with avidity; and for some time berries and roots formed the chief articles of food for the devoted band. So great was the distress, that a picture, by one of the celebrated Dutch masters,—now preserved with considerable care, and valued at an enormous price,—was then sold for a few guilders, to supply its unfortunate owner with the means of prolonging life for a season. Count Battenburg, who commanded a numerous but undisciplined band, of which Jophbert and De Wencke formed part, attempted to raise the siege; but the wary Toledo, with admirable dexterity, made such a disposition of his forces as would prevent the enfeebled men of Haarlem from making a sally, and at the same time permit him to give battle to the advancing host. The rout of the Dutch was complete. Battenburg, with a great number of his men, were slain; the whole of their convoy fell into the hands of the enemy; and the survivors of the party made a disorderly entry into Leyden. The sword bestowed upon our hero had not been suffered to rest, and deep had it drunk of gore that day.

The loss of their supplies, and the imminent dread of starvation which threatened them, induced the inhabitants to lend a favourable ear to any proposals of a capitulation. The Spaniards were not so well inclined to forego the spoil which would ensue on the town being given to the sword, and all proposals were at first haughtily rejected. Despair gave strength to the famished Dutch, and a sortie was planned, by which either an honourable death would await them, or a glorious success. These vigorous measures brought Toledo to his senses, and comparatively mild terms were granted. No sooner, however, did the false Spaniard get possession of the town than a fierce massacre, if possible more pitiless than that at Naarden, took place, and, under the axes of four executioners, the heads of the bravest and the best, including the admirable Riperda, were struck off. Slaughter such as this was not sufficiently speedy to satisfy the bloodthirsty Royalists; and men, women, and children, bound, were cast into the Sparen. The only excuse that the Spaniards could offer for their conduct was, that the besieged had offered indignities to the holy images. A great change soon after took place in the management of Philip's affairs, and the cruel and treacherous Alva was removed, some think at his own request, on account of his increasing infirmities, but, according to others, in order to avoid the degradation of a recall. The command of the Spanish forces was now entrusted to Lewis de Zuniga, and Requesens, a general of some abilities, but a great adept in diplomacy. More prudent than his predecessor, he was suspected to adopt the appearance of moderation, with a view to deceive those who might be tempted to put any trust in him.

The fall of Haarlem caused a great feeling of insecurity among our friends at Leyden, and in consequence of the necessity existing for his presence at Flushing, to prevent Requesens from raising the siege of Middleburg, which it was the chief object of the Patriots to reduce, William of Orange left Leyden with his forces.

With his usual penetration, the Prince committed to Janus Dousa, or Jean Van der Does, the Ulysses of the Patriots, the management of the important town of Leyden. A scholar of

considerable attainments, a soldier of some ability, and an orator of extraordinary eloquence, none was better suited to act as the deputy of the Prince in a place so much exposed to danger. He had lately returned from England, where, unfortunately for the Dutch, interest prevented Elizabeth from listening to the call of honour and ambition. Such was the ardent desire of all to march against the foe, that it would have been difficult to have prevailed upon any considerable number to stay inert within the walls, even if their leaders had so intended. William of Orange, however, having need of every available soldier, could not, without considerable inconvenience to himself, spare anything like an effectual garrison to the town; but, at his earnest solicitation, Jophbert and De Wencke, in both of whom he had considerable confidence, remained to assist Janus Dousa in the preparation of defences. Obedience is difficult to practise, and to an active mind nothing is so distasteful as a cessation of activity; nevertheless, both De Wencke and our hero had too much respect for their leader to murmur against his will.

Jophbert, indeed, found his life at Leyden very monotonous, after the exciting services he had so lately gone through; and beyond the necessity for a little skill in the construction of fortifications, nothing occurred to put his talents to the test. Great joy was occasioned to the men of Leyden on the news of the decisive victory obtained by the Insurgent's fleet over the Royalist's navy at Sacherlo, and their hopes were further raised by the fall of Middleburg. Thus far all seemed to favour the Patriot cause. These successes, however, were in a great measure counterbalanced by the fatal battle of Groningen, which took place on the 14th of April, 1574. Count Louis of Nassau, a noble of a very zealous and sanguine temperament, had, with considerable difficulty, raised and equipped an army of upwards of 10,000 men, chiefly French and German Protestants, who were far more famous for their devotion to the reformed faith, than for their skill in its defence. Zuniga, knowing the advantage gained to the cause of the Insurgents if the Count of Nassau should join his forces to those of his brother, despatched D'Avila, a brave and prudent officer, to intercept his march. A fierce conflict ensued, in which the

Spanish cavalry threw the German reiters into confusion. The foot also gave way, and a general rout took place. The Count Lewis, assisted by his brother Henry, and the Palatine of the Rhine, did all that courage could do to retrieve the fortune of the day; but the reiters they had rallied were soon broken by the enemy, and the gallant leaders of the Patriots lost their lives.

After this success, Requesens had more opportunities for recovering Leyden, which, from its situation and noted disaffection to the Royalist cause, it became a great object to obtain. Previous to the battle of Groningen, occasional parties of Spaniards hovered about the country; but until a later period, nothing very decisive was done towards laying siege to Leyden. Jophbert saw, with much joy, an opportunity of again joining in the fight, although he greatly dreaded the miseries which a strict blockade would occasion to the unhappy citizens. Occasional skirmishes took place in its vicinity, with varied success. On the 26th of May, however, the Spaniards reoccupied their positions in the neighbourhood of Leyden, and made every arrangement for a long siege. The Prince of Orange was fully aware of the price put by the Spaniards on the town, and the pains they would take to secure it. His exhortation to the patriotic Dousa was to expel all useless persons from within their walls, to collect an adequate supply of provisions, and to make a vigorous defence of the place, until the affairs of the state would enable them to send reinforcements. Notwithstanding his inability to afford the men of Leyden much assistance, William had garrisoned the forts of Gouda and Alphen with a strong party of Englishmen, under the command of Colonel Chester, thinking that, if not sufficiently strong to defeat the besieging party, at least they would be able to harass their movements, and give time to the citizens to prepare their defence. Jophbert, who had been busily engaged in raising the walls and stationing cannon, was walking with Alfrude Naarveldt on the ramparts, explaining to her the different means of defence, when the noise of fire-arms in the direction of Gouda could be faintly heard. Soon after, as the smoke cleared away, to his sore amazement, he became aware of the precipitate retreat of the English stationed there. "See, see, Alfrude!" he exclaimed;

"do you not see a party of men running, as if for their lives? can it be that those Englishmen, who have acquired such immortal renown at Cressy, Poitiers, and Agincourt, are now betaking themselves to an inglorious flight?"

Alfrude Naarveldt turned her eyes attentively to the spot indicated. "Alas!" said she, "the Spaniards have the advantage; the English cannot make head against them; we are lost!"

In course of time, the tide of battle turned nearer in their direction, and they could discern individual actors in the scene. It became too soon evident that Jophbert's surmises were correct: the English were in full retreat; the spirit of their ancestors ceased to beat in their craven breasts; and the islanders, either bought with Philip's gold, or struck by a sudden panic, abandoned the forts they had undertaken to defend, and purchased existence at the price of honour. Some, however, were actuated by a different spirit, and amidst the flying infantry, here and there might be seen a horseman who manifested a great disinclination to turn his back on the foe. One man in particular, of a commanding stature, mounted on a superb charger, appeared actively engaged in an effectual attempt to rally the broken infantry, of whom he might have been an officer of distinction. Deserted by his men, it was with considerable reluctance that the gallant Englishman, having laid one of the foremost of the pursuers low, turned his horse's head towards Leyden, and slowly followed his unworthy comrades. Now and then, any Spaniard who ventured too far in the pursuit would receive a heavy blow from the long sword of the horseman.

"Would," said Jophbert, as he beheld the valour of the single man who acted the part of rear-guard, "every one in yonder body partake of his spirit, our enemies might then be repulsed. But are not the men at Alphen forsaking their posts also? a malison be on the dastardly traitors!"

If the conduct of the garrison at Gouda was bad, that of the garrison of Alphen was worse: the last fled almost without striking a blow. The people of Leyden now began to flock to the ramparts, and many were the curses upon the heads of those who had so shamefully deserted their positions. The fugitives, who

had bent their way to Leyden, now besought admission into the town; but such was the disgust excited by their base conduct, that, although the citizens had no other regular troops, they refused to receive the English into their walls. To crown their cowardice with overt treachery, the latter then deserted *en masse* to the enemy. The hero of the rear-guard, attended by a few kindred spirits who shared his determination, rode to that part of the ramparts where Jophbert was standing, and calmly inquired whether it was the intention of the citizens to close their gates upon his companions and himself, as, if so, he added, the course which they should adopt would be to die sword in hand, after the manner of their fathers. Appreciation of valour is not far removed from valour itself. Touched with the courage displayed in these words, as well as struck with admiration of the previous conduct of the speaker, the men of Leyden prepared to admit the little party who alone had preserved the honour of the English name. Jophbert was the first to open the gates to afford them entrance. The foremost warrior acknowledged his courtesy, and directed a glance of more curiosity than was consistent with politeness towards Alfrude Naarveldt, whose natural charms were, to so good a judge of beauty as the islander, greatly increased by the alternate blushes and pallor which the excitement of the scene produced. The new comer introduced himself as William Atherton, and intimated that he had sprung from a family of some importance in the west of England. The Dutch, though not particularly famous for the possession of high military virtues, are certainly not slow to recognise merit in others: one and all gave the Englishmen such a reception as their courageous behaviour required; and arrangements were quickly made for their entertainment. Having assured himself of no attack being made upon the town for the present, William Atherton, making a profound obeisance to Alfrude Naarveldt, summoned his followers to their quarters.

The Spaniards were not slow to follow up their advantage, and, by the directions of Valdez, or Baldi, who was entrusted by Requesens with the conduct of the siege, a strict blockade was formed. The Spanish had found, to their cost, that the Dutch

were prepared to sell their fortifications only at the risk of their lives; and they considered the system of intercepting supplies, and starving the besieged to a surrender, more destructive to the enemy and advantageous to themselves than an active assault. With this view, Valdez constructed works to surround the town on all sides, so as to deprive the citizens of all communication with their friends in the other states. The Patriots, who were utterly unused to arms, could oppose nothing but daring courage to the science of their opponents; so that fort after fort was constructed by the besiegers almost before the generality of the besieged were fully aware of their objects. Atherton recommended nothing less than a resolute attack on the half-finished works, by which course, he intimated, the Spaniards would be much harassed and, if skilfully managed, but little loss of life might ensue to the besieged. This system met with decided opposition on the part of the majority of the citizens, who, with much justice, pointed out the disparity existing between their forces and those of the enemy on a fair field, and the great inconvenience the loss of any member of their party would entail upon the survivors. Thus opposed, Atherton was, with difficulty, induced to abandon his project, and betook himself to the formation of defences to resist any onslaught the Spaniards might make.

Atherton, who had become an inmate of Van der Werf's establishment, regarded De Wencke with no very friendly eye. The Englishman, though possessed of the most resolute courage, was of a very volatile and fickle disposition. The beauty of Alfrude Naarveldt had made a great impression upon him, and the amorous Atherton had great hopes of supplanting De Wencke, for whose quiet habits he had conceived the most supreme contempt, in her good opinions. It was not enough for the constant Alfrude to reject any overture he might make: the rejected, with the genuine perseverance of the Anglo-Saxon race, trusted his handsome appearance and easy grace would ultimately accomplish his purpose. Between rival lovers there is seldom much love existing; and it was quite sufficient for any proposition to emanate from De Wencke to insure its obstinate rejection by Atherton. Far better would it have been if unity prevailed

among the little garrison of the devoted town, but so wide was the difference existing between many of them, that few proceedings met with a unanimous approval.

Janus Dousa made every preparation skill could suggest to render abortive any attempt to carry the town by assault; but as the course recommended by the Prince had not been adopted, the store of provisions was utterly inadequate to the necessities of the besieged. In fact, had the whole of the Englishmen been received at Leyden, so great would have been the demand upon their scanty stock, that any lengthened defence would have been impossible. Every means of exciting the energies of the citizens were resorted to; and our old acquaintance, Malavox, earnestly exhorted his flock to strain every nerve in defence of their liberties. So great was the zeal of the excitable minister, that at times he was possessed by nothing less than frenzy; but his discourses were not without effect. He dictated a solemn oath to many of the citizens—that the Spaniards should only enter the town over the dead bodies of its defenders.

De Wencke (who was a great advocate for resting quietly within the walls, and leaving active measures until some error of the enemy should enable an attack to be made with effect) suggesting this method in the presence of Atherton, the latter eloquently asserted, that in a few days the Spaniards would be in a position to overlook their walls, and the day for action thus be permitted to pass. He pointed out the advantage to be derived from convincing the Spaniards of their intrepidity, before the superiority of the discipline of the Royalists should render any efforts of the Patriots fruitless. On this occasion, the Englishman carried all before him: the spirits of the burghers, chafed by so inglorious a procedure as trusting to their thick walls, instead of to their stout hearts, for defence, clamoured violently for an opportunity to display their prowess. Under Atherton's directions, a fort of some importance, which was calculated to give the enemy great advantage, was the one selected for attack. Nothing was further from the thoughts of the besiegers than a sally from the besieged. The Spaniards, versed in all the tactics of war, were wont to look down upon the Dutch as possessing

only untrained courage, restrained by an over-regard for prudence; and the previous apparent inactivity of the defenders of Leyden induced the Royalists to form a very disparaging idea of their prowess. But on this occasion, as well as many others, the Dutch shewed themselves possessed of all the spirit of the Belgæ of old. Janus Dousa did not share the hopes of those who imagined that Atherton's enterprise would be attended with success; but he knew the ill consequences of checking the ardour of men eager to engage. On a given signal, the majority of the available power of the town, including Jophbert, ably conducted by the bold Atherton, made an impetuous sortie upon the fort fixed on. So unexpected was the attack, that the enemy at first gave way; and the assailants had nearly accomplished their purpose, when the Spaniards, taking courage from the small numbers of the Patriots, returned to the combat with vigour. Considerable resolution was showed by both sides; but the skill of the Spaniards once more turned the scale in their favour. In vain did the unfortunate suggester of the movement brave death in all directions, in the hope of retrieving the fortune of the day. With heavy loss the citizens retired within their walls, after having laid many of their antagonists low.

Atherton freely expected to have received a severe reprimand for originating so unsuccessful a movement; but, to his surprise, so far from undergoing censure, his undaunted courage received the thanks of the governor and council. His irritation at the failure of the scheme was somewhat enhanced by the reflection that his obstinacy had been the cause of a severe wound to De Wencke, who, notwithstanding the ill success which attended his suggestions, lent every assistance to carry into effect the dictates of the popular will. Violently as Atherton dreaded De Wencke as a rival in love, he was not so lost to honour as to rejoice at the misfortune which had befallen him. During the time that his rival was thus indisposed, he had, however, the bad taste to make further advances to the "Beauty of the Rhine," as he styled Alfrude Naarveldt; but his proposals met with a more decided rejection than before; and at length Mynheer Naarveldt procured good Master Malavox, when in a lucid interval, to

remonstrate with the headstrong son of Albion on the indelicacy, as well as the inutility, of his addresses at such a time.

Ere the favoured suitor recovered his health, the enemy had obtained great advantages over the besieged. The late attack on one of their fortifications had taught them the necessity for greater prudence; and Valdez had effectually cut off all means of conveying supplies to the town. The only hope of the men of Leyden was, either that their store of provisions would enable them to maintain the contest until the Prince of Orange could raise an army sufficiently powerful to defeat the Spaniards, or that, by some brilliant *coup-de-main*, they might free themselves from the besiegers without any assistance from their friends. This last hope, however, was confined to the most ardent and enthusiastic of the citizens: the more prudent saw, in the failure of their first attack, the probable fate of any others. Dousa had, with great wisdom, directed an account to be taken of the stores available, and had apportioned them so as to provide for the subsistence of the townsmen as long as possible.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding the determination of the majority of the gallant burghers to maintain their independence to the last, every one within the walls was not a good man; and true it is, some few there were who did not scruple to assert that the miseries of famine, which already began to manifest themselves, and which must increase according to the duration of the siege, could not be more tolerable than the fury of the Spaniards, which, they thought, a prudent concession on their part might, in a great measure, avert. The chief of these malcontents was one Hans Heilbach, who conceived that, on failure of other schemes to subdue the spirit of the inhabitants, much good might be derived from the feud existing between De Wencke and Atherton, and the mad passion borne by the latter to the "Beauty of the Rhine."

Heilbach was a deep intriguer; and moreover, being of a character resembling the Vicar of Bray, trusted to feather his own nest by any treachery to the Patriot cause. To patriotism he was a complete stranger: if his interests could be furthered by any appearance of antipathy to Spain, he had no objection to

become an apparant friend to liberty. In the present instance he saw no good to be gained by resistance, and his selfish mind considered much advantage might be derived from submission.

CHAPTER XVIII.

In which the Reader is informed of the Designs of Mynheer Heilbach.

WHATEVER dread of famine Heilbach might have had, bade fair to be abundantly realised. To the gallant men of Leyden the words of the poet might be well applied :

“ With Upas' breath, disease and death
Had summoned them to bow
Their dauntless hearts, their boasted strength:
Oh! what avail they now?
Those who would scorn a traitor's part,
Nor kindred claim with fear,
Must own this hour a mightier power
Than that of bow and spear.”

If these were the feelings of the good and noble, what must the sentiments of the treacherous be? Heilbach strove hard to cherish a feeling of discontent in the unhappy city; but, to the honour of the inhabitants, notwithstanding their minor differences, few there were who would listen to any proposals savouring of capitulation.

Janus Dousa and the patriotic Van der Werf were well aware of the disloyal feelings of Heilbach, and well did they put the citizens on their guard against his arguments. No reasonings, however, could convince any one that dire distress did not exist in the town. Their stock of provisions, never large, was daily diminishing; and but little prospect had they of any supplies being sent them from their friends at Flushing.

With the view of ascertaining how many were affected with Heilbach's spirit, and, if possible, of silencing his attempts to

corrupt the rest, by an appeal to the citizens themselves, Dousa called a council of the principal inhabitants. They nobly responded to his call. As Jophbert and De Wencke directed their steps to the old council-chamber—for the present handsome Hotel de Ville was not then in being,—they were greeted with loud cries of “death to traitors! no peace with the enemy!” Arrived at the appointed place, a melancholy scene presented itself. All, indeed, “were wan and pale:” the handsome, thoughtful countenance of the governor seemed stamped with no ordinary care. So great a trust as the command of the important town of Leyden had preyed as much on the mind of Dousa as famine had on his body. The good Van der Werf, though possessed of indomitable resolution, seemed, in person, sadly altered; but, to our hero’s eye, want and care had made most inroads on poor Malavox. Of him it might be said, “quantum mutatus ab illo,” who once possessed so portly an appearance. Of all that ghastly assembly, however, few were traitors. Dousa, as governor, with a manner in which gentleness and dignity were united, briefly stated that he had thought proper to convene the chief inhabitants of their city to know from them if it was their intention to lend him assistance in the prosecution of the noble cause in which they were engaged. For his part, having taken an oath never to fall alive into the hands of the enemy, he was resolved to act up to his word. All who thought fit to choose a miserable existence, in preference to a glorious end in a righteous undertaking, were at perfect liberty to do so. He could not forbear alluding to the treachery displayed by the Spaniards towards all those misguided men who had suffered themselves to be seduced by the bland words and promises of the false foe.

A shout of applause hailed this manly harangue; and the vast majority of the citizens expressed in decided terms their firm intention of living or dying in defence of their hearths and homes, and their beloved chief.

Van der Werf next exhorted the assembly to be mindful of the resolution they had ever displayed in defence of their rights, and reminded them of the benefit which would arise to the Patriot cause generally from an obstinate resistance, which would, in all

probability, induce their secret well-wishers to take a more prominent part in their behalf.

Heilbach, who governed a very small minority of the council, in the mildest terms begged leave, in a few words, to bring his opinions before their notice. In favour of a surrender of the town, he urged that by so doing they were incurring a danger, which, if indeed it could not be averted, was fixed and determined; while, in continuing their obstinate defence, evils, of which those they then suffered were but a prelude, would afflict them. Under these circumstances, he thought that the calmer portion of the assembly could not but admit that it would be more prudent, while the enemy was yet at a distance, to treat for peace.

Here a hoarse, dry voice exclaimed, behind the speaker: "I am in a great strait: let us now fall into the hands of the Lord, for His mercies are great; and let us not fall into the hands of men." All eyes were turned towards the interrupting party, in whom they soon recognised the careworn and emaciated Malavox.

"You have spoken well, Master Malavox!" exclaimed several of the council. "No terms with the Spaniards!"

Heilbach, observing the current of popular opinion was against him, wisely took a somewhat different course. He continued, that he fully concurred in the meaning of Master Malavox, and he trusted that, if resistance were decided upon, none would excel himself in his zeal to enforce the decree of the council; but he considered that, in the present instance, they had done all that brave men could do, and that the only course open to them was to admit themselves beaten, and to make the best possible terms with their conquerors.

"Did not Moses," again interrupted Malavox, "rather suffer affliction with the people of God, than enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season?"

Here the assembly set up a loud shout of applause, not unmingled with threats of personal violence to the obnoxious Heilbach.

"If not for yourselves," said the latter, "at least for the

sake of your helpless wives and little ones, pause ere you take so fatal a step as to persist in your obstinacy. Have pity on others, if you have no compassion on yourselves."

Loud cries were raised of, "Our wives and little ones are not so helpless as to counsel base submission. In the defence of our town, we may require their assistance; by yielding, we should incur their contempt for ever. The daughters of Holland are not so degenerate as to have lost every vestige of spirit."

Finding all arguments useless, Heilbach made sundry protestations of fidelity to the state, by very few believed, and resumed his original place amidst a torrent of reproaches, which Dousa and others in vain essayed to check.

The veteran Naarveldt—a man, as we have informed our readers, of few words—then addressed the assembly, and was greeted with every demonstration of respect.

"My friends," said Naarveldt, "we are this day met to debate on a subject of no ordinary interest. Our lives, liberty, and property, are at stake. Mynheer Heilbach has suggested, as a means of averting calamity, that submission (unconditional, perhaps) should be made to the enemy. I will not dwell upon the atrocities practised upon the men of Rotterdam, Alcmár, Naerden, and other places, where but little opposition was made to the Spaniards. What right have we, who have acquired a laudable distinction in the cause of freedom, to expect more lenient treatment at the hands of the enemy than the unfortunate inhabitants of those ill-fated places? The die is cast; the time for submission is gone by; to us there now remains but an uncompromising adhesion to the cause in which we have engaged. After taking so active a part in opposition to the Spanish will, it were worse than madness to hope for aught of mercy from the infuriated foe. On either hand, indeed, a certain death awaits us: if we return to the allegiance of the bloodstained traitor, Philip, what rewards our too late loyalty?—death, a cruel death. I cannot deny that, in holding out to the last, we have but little chance of avoiding death—a slow, a lingering death; but what comparison can exist between a glorious death in a noble cause, and an ignominious doom from the very men in favour of whom we

act treacherously to our convention, and who, all the while, despise us for our weakness? For my part, whatever famine may assail us, I am determined to come to no terms, as long as I can defend myself with my right arm, and obtain a subsistence from my left!"

Deafening were the plaudits which greeted this straightforward harangue. The assembled citizens raised the cry: "No terms with the Spaniards, while our left arms furnish us with food, and our right the means of defence!"

From the chiefs in council, the cry reached the crowd of anxious listeners outside; and far and wide rang the same fierce shout, gathering additional force as it went. Men, women, and children abjured all capitulation, so long as a single arm remained among them. So great was the clamour, that it even reached the ears of the besiegers, on whom it was not lost. All the really good and brave, such as our *quondam* acquaintance, Don Pedro, regretted that the obduracy of the inhabitants would expose them to the miseries of a protracted blockade, if not a capture by storm; while the greatmajority were grievously disappointed at the failure of all hopes of obtaining possession of the town, and the booty therein, by means of a negotiation.

What can be stronger than the will of a free and enlightened people in the cause of real liberty? It frequently happens that the torrent of popular opinion takes a dangerous course, and then woe be to the object of its wrath! but in the present instance it was indeed a noble sight—little inferior to that of the heroic magnanimity of Eustace St. Pierre and his associates—to behold the half-famished inhabitants of Leyden so earnest in their resolution to live and die free. After so hearty a manifestation of the feelings of the townsmen, it were useless to make further inquiries into their intentions. The respected governor, therefore, in a few words, dissolved the assembly; and Heilbach and his clique, feigning the most complete concurrence in the proceedings of the council, withdrew to cogitate on the best method of delivering the town into the hands of the enemy. A small guard of those of the inhabitants who had not incurred the resentment of the people, was compelled to act as a *garde d'honneur* to the obnoxious

Heilbach, to prevent him from being torn limb from limb by the yelling mob, who denounced him as a traitor, a spy, and a coward, in some of which capacities, it cannot be denied, he was in the habit of acting.

Judging it more expedient to lull the suspicions of his intended dupes before putting into execution any attempt to accomplish his purpose, for some time none showed so much activity as Heilbach in placing the town in a better position to resist an assault. So well, indeed, did he play the hypocrite, that few doubted the sincerity of his protestations. Meanwhile, as he had said, the famine grew exceedingly grievous, and the store of corn became low; but the prudence of Dousa prevented any extravagant use of it being made. All additional means of subsistence had been tried: the once sleek charger of Jophbert had been killed, both to save the expense of his food, and to furnish some prolongation of life to the wretched inmates of Naarveldt's establishment.

Of all diseases, none perhaps has so many different modes of operation as famine: on some it produced high delirium, on others but melancholy; while loss of strength and energy was common to all. Poor Malavox, whose sanguine temperament rendered him a likely subject for frenzy, was possessed by delusions that he was a chosen agent of the Almighty to declare His wrath upon the people of Leyden. Clad in the coarsest sackcloth, his feet bare, and his long hair hanging dishevelled over his attenuated face, he might be frequently observed, night and day, fulminating in scriptural language the direst ills upon the luckless defenders of the city. A melancholy sight was it to see him, whose commanding figure and fiery but untaught eloquence had made him a general object of reverence, now wasted almost to a shadow, uttering mournful cries, and acting as the harbinger of woe. Great terror was inspired in the minds of the more credulous and superstitious part of the community by his denunciations; and had it not been for the interference of the better educated citizens, it is not improbable that, as the Jonah of the town, the unfortunate man would have lost his life. To all such as threatened him with violence, the maniac would reply:

"You cannot forestal nature by much. War, pestilence, and famine will soon make away with the body of Malavox; and well would it be if his life were the only one taken. But, mark me, the abomination that maketh desolate will reduce you to the greatest extremities, and but few shall be left to behold brighter days. My career will soon be over: any attempt to save my own life will be useless; and it is the will of the Lord that destructions happen. A remnant shall be saved. Let us not, therefore, thwart our destinies."

From the impetuous and volatile disposition of Atherton, Heilbach flattered himself that the Englishman could be easily won over to his designs. Watching an opportunity when the manifest preference of the young Dutchman to himself by the "Beauty of the Rhine" had particularly roused Atherton's ire, the smooth-tongued Heilbach accosted him in accents of the greatest sympathy, and deplored the noted fickleness of the female sex. Condolence to an excited mind, although frequently arousing the utmost indignation in its object, is sometimes pleasing. To Atherton, in a foreign land, in which his only claim to consideration lay in his valour, sympathy was new, and by no means distasteful. He could not deny that the failure of his hopes had greatly disappointed him; but added, that he still retained a faint idea of overcoming his favoured rival. The wily Heilbach, by way of profiting most by the gloomy mood in which his companion was, suggested that there were many both fairer and richer than Alfrude Naarvedt, on whom his good looks and qualities would make a suitable impression. The flattery contained in this speech was not thrown away on the vain Atherton, who eagerly demanded an explanation. Having extracted an oath of secrecy, Heilbach, in a guarded manner, proceeded to observe, that Alfrude Naarveldt could bear no comparison in beauty to the stately damsels of Spain, any of whom would be happy to become his bride, on one single condition, namely, that he should confer a favour both on the Spaniards and Dutch, by furthering, as far as lay in his power, the efforts he (Heilbach) was making towards a reconciliation between the conflicting parties: Others besides angels can quote Scripture; and the

deceiver remarked, that blessed are the "peace-makers." He pointed out, in mysterious terms, that a surrender of the town would save his good friends much suffering, and would ensure Atherton the fairest donna in Spain; or, if needs be, put him in a position to compel the "Beauty of the Rhine" to accept his suit. The Englishman, who was not possessed of very acute reasoning powers, was rather slow to comprehend Heilbach's meaning; but when, at last, the truth flashed across his mind, great was his disgust. Vain and selfish he might have been; but treachery was a crime of which he was guiltless. Obeying the impetuous dictates of his warm heart, and raising his fist (which, notwithstanding the want he had undergone, was of no ordinary dimensions), Atherton struck the traitor prostrate to the earth, exclaiming, in a voice of thunder: "Scoundrel! do you think me such as yourself, that I should deal falsely towards those who have acted generously towards me? Fortunately for you, I have pledged myself to secrecy, and my word is binding upon me. Had it been otherwise, I would have taken care that your baseness should have met its reward. You are not worthy of my steel—my sword is only used against the brave."

Heilbach thought proper to conceal his rage under an appearance of injured innocence. He therefore answered: "Rash young man! what has induced you to raise your hand against one who has been doing his best to serve you, and who has only mentioned his schemes to you from an earnest desire to save yourself and friends from the calamities consequent upon your madness?"

Atherton, however, was too much infuriated at the unprincipled suggestion of Heilbach to pay any attention to his apology, and he therefore took his departure from the scene of their conversation. Heilbach rose from the ground, certainly a sadder, perhaps a wiser, but we fear by no means a better, man. He had acquired one piece of worldly wisdom; namely, to be in future less precipitate in his advances to those who contained any probity under manners and circumstances which might induce him to hope for success. We frequently find men, engaged in dishonourable pursuits, make use of perseverance and

energy, which those occupied in better causes are not sufficiently zealous to employ. The devil not only appears as, but in some few particulars adopts the conduct of, an angel of light, the better to ensnare. The children of this world are in their generations certainly wiser than the children of light. Thus it was with Heilbach: spurned both by the frenzied Malavox and the impetuous Atherton, he resolved to spare no attempts to work on the volatile Englishman, either by open endeavours or secret subtlety, to become his tool. The latter method, his recent experience convinced him, was the more promising; and the deceiver betook himself, in the first place, to remove the effect of his previous suggestions from the mind of his victim, and then to prevail upon him to become his accomplice.

The fertile mind of the plotter decided at length on an admirable stratagem: he considered that means might be employed to induce the Englishman to leave his guard when stationed as sentry, so that the Spanish troops might easily make themselves masters of the town. Having given the matter due deliberation, he forged a letter from Alfrude Naarveldt, asserting that it was solely by her father's commands she was compelled to reject his addresses, and lamenting he had prohibited any communication with him; but hinting that if, on the following night, when it would be his turn to mount guard on the northern bastion, he could contrive to be at a spot indicated in a totally different direction, he might perhaps be favoured with a short *tête à tête*. The time fixed was one o'clock, and every precaution was adopted to ensure the safe receipt of the fatal document.

Love is proverbially blind, and, if we may believe the opinion prevalent of the English among our Continental neighbours, we islanders are no less so; therefore it is a matter of no great wonder that Atherton, being blind both by feeling and nature, should suffer himself to be deluded by the counterfeit note. On the night appointed, Atherton was vigilantly pacing the ramparts, looking attentively towards the Spanish lines, where nought of life could be seen, so hushed did everything appear in tranquil repose. Just before the clock struck the hour of one, as there appeared no vestige of movement in the hostile camp, the sentinel

thought his post might be left for a few minutes, while he went to the trysting spot to meet the "Beauty of the Rhine." He stealthily secreted the tow with which his huge matchlock was to be fired, and held his sword with both hands, lest its jingling should betray him. Some little time elapsed ere he reached the rendezvous, and when he arrived there, no trace could he discern of the fair one he trusted to meet. Knowing that the daughters of Eve are not in general very punctual, Atherton resolved to wait a few minutes, after which, should he still be disappointed, he would return to his position, and resume his duties.

Meanwhile the Spaniards, who had throughout the siege been in secret correspondence with the infamous Heilbach, had received accurate information of his traitorous schemes; and a body of experienced veterans was in readiness with scaling ladders to mount the walls which the imprudent Atherton had left.

It has been previously stated that Malavox, while suffering from delirium, night and day patrolled the city, denouncing woe on the inhabitants. The weather being milder, and the nights shorter, the prophet of ill was enabled to continue his ominous avocation from sunset to sunrise. On the night in question, the unhappy man was screaming lustily, in almost every street in the town, "Woe to Ariel, to Ariel, the city where David dwelt!" He came immediately opposite the house of Mynheer Naarveldt, in which Jophbert, exhausted with the privations he had undergone, was enjoying "tired nature's sweet restorer—balmy sleep." The wildness of the cry roused him from his slumber; and as the disturber of his rest proceeded in his course, he became sensible of some other noise. Urged by some presentiment of danger, Jophbert lost no time in hurrying to the spot whence the sound proceeded, and found that woe indeed had befallen the city. A few of the enemy had reached the fortifications, when the ladder they were using, and which was reared in haste and without much care, slipped from its hold to the ground. The silence of the night magnified the sound, and brought it to the ears of the young soldier. The conscience-stricken Atherton, who had now returned from his fruitless enterprise, appalled at the danger he had occasioned, drew his long sword, and shouting loudly to

awaken the citizens, ran headlong against the foe. He was ably seconded by Jophbert, and the two for some time succeeded in repelling the assailants who had attained the walls, and preventing the ingress of the others. The fight, however, was too unequal even for Anglo-Saxon and genuine Teutonic bravery, and had it not been for the assistance of the citizens, who were attracted to the spot by the shouts of the combatants, both of the gallant men must have fallen. The Englishman, unwilling to taint his weapon with the blood of the perfidious Heilbach, who had come to witness the success of his plot, contented himself with kicking him over the fortifications, which he did with such good will as to break the neck of the traitor. The Spaniards, by no means destitute of courage, fought with considerable energy; and had they met with the support on which they reckoned, it is likely they might have gained possession of the town; but their comrades being unable to scale the walls, they were left to trust to their own resources; and the fast arriving reinforcements of their opponents decided the affair. Unfortunately, Atherton, full of remorse for his previous imprudence, acted with such daring intrepidity as to appear to court death. From a chivalrous contempt of danger, carrying no defensive armour, after having sent many of his antagonists to the gloomy Hades, he received a mortal wound in the left breast. His fall occasioned much dismay to his comrades, to whom his valour had endeared him. The Spaniards, completely overpowered, disdaining to ask for quarter, were all cut down; after which the Dutch had time to inquire into their own loss. In addition to Atherton, a considerable number of their party had received severe wounds, and a few had been slain. The Englishman was not quite dead, but it was evident that his minutes were numbered. In a faint voice he implored forgiveness for the consequences of his folly, and, in particular, expressed his sorrow for his stubborn opposition to De Wencke's counsels. Then seizing the hand of Jophbert, who was near him, the valiant Atherton was no more. The letter, which was still upon his person, convinced the bystanders that his conduct arose not from premeditated disaffection; and his gallant efforts to atone for his fault effectually silenced any reproaches

from the affectionate people he had so faithfully served. His was a loss much felt by the citizens; for, although somewhat over-zealous, he was constant in adversity as well as bold in prosperity. He died a soldier's death, and he received a soldier's funeral. A spacious grave was excavated, and soon contained the mortal remains of those who fell in the night attack; and no few tears were shed, both by English and Dutch, over the brave men who had so distinguished themselves.

The body of the wretch Heilbach, who had been the cause of the misfortune, was affixed to a long pole, and suspended from the ramparts, as a warning to any others who might contemplate imitating his base example. This, no doubt, had a salutary effect; but a spirit of discontent had become prevalent among many who, at the commencement of the siege, had displayed great resolution in the defence of the town. Fortunately, all were not actuated by this spirit; and many of the inhabitants, including women and young persons, laboured hard to construct other fortifications of sufficient strength and height to prevent any further assault from the enemy. The Spaniards, however, had had abundant proof of the vigour of the besieged, and thought it a more safe course to remain idle within their forts, and starve the Insurgents to terms, than to expose themselves again to their fury. Provisions were now becoming scarcer and scarcer, and hundreds fell a prey to want and the diseases consequent thereupon. De Wencke had found, lying under the walls of the town in a state of utter destitution, the prophet of evil, Malavox, and had borne him to Naarveldt's house, with the hope of restoring him to life. The unfortunate man, who in his last moments had recovered his reason, refused all their offers of food, observing that the proffered sustenance (broiled horseflesh and a little bread) could not prolong his existence, and would materially reduce their little store. He added, he was convinced that a termination would ere long be put to the siege, and begged of them to accede to no proposals of a surrender. He thanked Jophbert for having given him so much information on the theory of the Romish Church as distinguished from its practice, but trusted that he might now consider him as a member of the same Church as

himself. He intimated that, though in some things his enthusiasm had carried him too far, still he could not aver any regret for having quitted the Romish faith. Jophbert was, by dwelling among people of a religion comparatively free from austerity and hypocrisy, become more averse to a creed which was supported by a mixture of both; but he had not abjured it, and he could not therefore assure the dying man of the perfect community of their views. Malavox had heard enough to convince him that the real difference between their ideas was but small, and a sweet smile came over his sallow face as he breathed his last.

There are few things which, by constant contact, become more familiar to us than death: the first sight of a corpse fills even the most careless with horror; but as we become aware that the common enemy of mankind is making dread havoc on all sides, we cease to fear his approach, and a peaceful resignation or an apathetic indifference makes us contemplate his progress and our destinies with composure. Distance not only lends enchantment, but terror, to the view; and the dance of death excites but little horror, either by remembrance of its past, or dread of its future course, to those who have beheld its operations on every side, and who only await their call to pay the great debt of nature. Naarveldt and his family had witnessed more than one death-bed, besides encountering the corpses of the famished outcasts, who had crawled outside their doors to die; and the peaceful death of the former maniac led them to hope that their last end, which they believed to be very nigh, might be like his. The mortal remains of the deceased were becomingly interred, Jophbert assisting at the funeral.

The relief which Malavox had spoken of was an example of the truth of the proverb of the sage, that "hope deferred maketh the heart sick." William of Orange, though greatly sympathising with their distresses, saw no means of mitigating them. The bread offered by Naarveldt to the former prophet of woe was the last he had to offer, and it became an acknowledged fact that nothing but a special intervention of Providence could save them from utter starvation. The commonality, who had hitherto acted with considerable patriotism and self-denial, began to mutiny

against their leaders, and at length, so averse did they become to any further resistance, that a considerable number of them demanded of the inflexible Van der Werf either that he should give them food, or admit the Spaniards into the town.

"I have solemnly sworn," said the burgomaster, "that I shall never surrender myself or my fellow-citizens to the cruel and perfidious Spaniards; and I will sooner die than violate my oath. Food I have none, else would I give it you. But if my death can be of use to you, take, tear me in pieces, and devour me. I shall die with satisfaction if I know that, by my death, I shall for one moment relieve you from your dire necessity."

On this being reported to Dousa, the classic governor quoted the lines of Horace :

" Justum ac tenacem propositi virum,
Non vultus instantis tyranni;
Non civium ardor prava jubentium,
Mente quatit solidâ."*

Whatever changes society may undergo, the feelings of the people are much the same: prone, as well as their betters, to change, "impiger iracundus," they still retain, in all climates, under all circumstances, a love of justice and a respect for magnanimity, which tends to show that, however fallen man's nature may be, the original was still created in the image of God. The people of Leyden formed no exception to the general rule: their repinings were immediately silenced by the noble speech of Van der Werf, and they withdrew for the time, again possessed with a strong intention to submit to no compromise with the foe. This determination did not last long: schemes were formed for yielding the town up into the hands of the besiegers, and some vigorous spirits had trusted to put their own guards upon the ramparts, and admit the Spaniards when an opportunity should present itself. Dousa took ample precautions to prevent any such attempt being practised, and never did he allow any of

* These lines were, we believe, quoted by the Dutch Patriot Barneveldt, on his becoming the victim of what Napoleon, perhaps, would call worse than a murder,—a blunder at the age of seventy-two years.

the suspected parties to mount guard, unless in the company of some one whose fidelity could be depended upon.

Naarveldt, although possessed of considerable wealth, was utterly unable to procure sufficient sustenance for his household, and they, in common with the other inhabitants, felt acutely the miseries of famine. All the ordinary means of subsistence being considerably reduced, recourse was had to substances from which the stomach revolts with horror. Jophbert, being off duty, was endeavouring to obtain some root, or carrion, on which to support life; and Alfrude Naarveldt was engaged in the same hopeless pursuit by his side, when the attention of both was directed to a few vegetables growing outside the city walls.

Necessity, says the proverb, knows no law; and this circumstance, perhaps, induced the hungry pair to venture from their stronghold to procure the food of which they stood in such great need. No danger appeared to threaten them, and they hastened to the place which they had before observed. Here they had the good fortune to find a few stunted esculents, which the Spaniards had neglected to destroy or remove. The cravings of nature were first satisfied with the raw roots, after which, having collected as many as they could find for the benefit of their friends, the two prepared to depart. Unfortunately, their movements had been perceived; and before they could reach the town, they were beset by a party of Spanish cavalry. Jophbert prepared to defend himself, but was soon overpowered by force of numbers; and so sudden had been the attack of the Spanish, that before the citizens could make any sally for their relief, the unfortunate Jophbert and Alfrude were prisoners, far beyond the chance of pursuit. They were speedily bound and brought into the presence of Valdez, the Spanish general, who ordered them to be kept in close custody until an opportunity should occur of consulting his superior officer as to their fate, particularly as to the desirability of transmitting them to Spain. Any appeal against such a course, Jophbert knew, would be both humiliating and useless. He therefore submitted to his fate with resignation, being not without hope that the intercession of Don Pedro would procure the release of himself and Alfrude. While on their

way to their respective places of confinement, he bade the terror-stricken Alfrude take courage: he had no opportunity to say more, ere they were separated, and for some time saw not each other again.

The grief of Naarveldt and De Wencke, on receiving intelligence of the misfortune which had befallen them, was intense; the hopeful disposition of the latter prompted him to think that but little harm might happen to them till the good offices of Don Pedro de Valencia would set them at liberty. No arguments could prevail upon the bereaved father to take comfort, and for some time he remained in a most agonised state, until a heavy stupor succeeded the violent paroxysms of grief. From this it was long before he recovered; and when his mind grew calmer, a settled melancholy took possession of him.

To return to the gallant defenders of Leyden. Their friends cherished hopes of relieving them from their hazardous position, and a council was held to deliberate on the best plan for conveying help to the besieged. With the dispirited land forces of the states, there was but little chance of expelling the Spaniards from their fortifications; and the passage by water being also in the hands of the enemy, any attempt to send reinforcements and supplies by such means must end in failure. Violent diseases require violent remedies; and violent indeed was the only remedy which seemed feasible. Despair induced the States to adopt a course, the only parallel for which is to be found in the ruthless manner in which the Russian peasantry freed themselves from the French invader. It was decided, as a *dernier ressort*, to employ the canals and dykes, which it had ever been their object to preserve as the barrier of cultivation against the sea, as a means of compelling the besiegers of Leyden to raise the blockade. Having thus come to a resolution, the leaders of the Patriots displayed considerable activity in carrying it into execution. A numerous fleet of boats, propelled by oars and manned by the Zealanders, who were at that time some of the best seamen in Europe, was equipped with the utmost despatch, and committed to the command of Admiral Boissot.

The Spaniards, who had throughout the whole siege displayed

the utmost pertinacity, successively evacuated fort after fort, as the waters advanced; but still such as were erected on the higher ground enabled them to maintain their position. Boissot was a man of too much enterprise and spirit to be deterred by danger, and, notwithstanding the untowardness of the wind and water, the gallant seaman was enabled to proceed in his novel design, vigorously attacked such of the fortifications as opposed his progress, and thus rendered his future operations more secure. Every attempt to reach Leyden was made ere the miseries of the besieged should prompt them to submit. Unfortunately, the autumnal tides were retarded by a north wind of unusual duration, and the draft of Boissot's boats did not permit him to advance until the water should have acquired greater depth. In the beleaguered city, matters would soon come to a crisis: what few horses, dogs, or other animals still remained, were killed to supply food to the inhabitants; hides, and other equally disagreeable substances, were eagerly seized; and all now depended upon a change of the unfavourable wind. A plague also, of unusual violence, swept off many who had survived the effects of famine; and, from the shaken constitutions of the citizens, few who were taken recovered.

In the middle of September, to the inexpressible delight of the besieged, on the surface of the water, at some little distance, could be discerned the masts of the boats despatched for their relief, and of whose preparations they had been informed by means of carrier pigeons. No reprieve to a culprit under sentence of death could have produced more emotion than did the sight of these long-exexpected succours to the men of Leyden. The joy was greatly damped by a remark made by the almost broken-hearted Naarveldt, who, pointing to the vane on one of the churches, assured them that, as long as the wind remained in its then quarter, all hopes of relief would be fruitless. Although none could gainsay this, yet there was a strong tendency to hope that the contrary might be the case; and it was with lighter hearts that those of the citizens who were not required on duty retired to rest.

Naarveldt said right: the wind still continued in the north-

east, and for many days the wretched men of Leyden looked for some movement of the flotilla, in vain. Many, in the last stage of disease, were brought, that they might, with their last glance, look upon the messengers of safety for those whose natural strength would enable them to survive. A small portion regarded the unfavourable aspect of nature as a proof of the wrath of the Deity against their cause, and once more resorted to treachery to deliver the town into the hands of the enemy. The indefatigable Dousa, ably seconded by the well-affected portion of the community, effectually nipped their treasons in the bud; and still did they persevere in their allegiance to the convention, and endure the most pressing degrees of want and disease, in preference to yielding.

It may be that mortals are reduced to the extreme of necessity in order to convince them that their own powers avail nothing, and that they must look to a higher Being for assistance: at any rate, the flotilla had been despatched in the beginning of September, and it was now the end. Still the Leydeners appeared as far from relief as ever, and in a few more days the whole stock of provisions, both ordinary and special, would be exhausted. Man proposes, but God disposes; and the beleaguered had at length the pleasure of observing that the wind had changed, and blew directly from the sea towards them, propelling the water in great quantities to the valley surrounding their walls. The fortifications which the Spaniards deemed proof both against nature and art, were almost washed away; and the starving men of Leyden, with eyes full of tears, but hearts full of gratitude, saw the fleet, which had so long remained stationary, make a movement to their help. Boissot soon profited by the happy change. All such of the enemy's forts as impeded his progress were forthwith attacked and speedily deserted by the foe. A day of fierce retribution was come for the Spaniards: the Zealanders, in their flat-bottomed boats, attacked them with long hooked poles, as well as other weapons, by means of which they both drowned and wounded the panic-stricken enemy. Great numbers were slain by the enraged mariners, or overwhelmed in the rising waters. One man, named Peter Borgia, saved him-

self by the exercise of wonderful presence of mind. He had been dragged into one of the boats by the use of the long poles, and ably feigned death. Watching his opportunity, he contrived to throw overboard, or slay his captors, and make his escape in the boat. Few, however, met with this good fortune; and the destruction of the enemy was complete. At length, after much difficulty, the Spaniards were compelled to evacuate the last of their forts; and on the 3rd of October, 1574, Admiral Boissot advanced to the gates of Leyden. Food was judiciously given to the starving inhabitants, and although some, by eating to excess, caused their death, yet the majority of them were enabled to accompany their persevering deliverers to the church whose vane had for so long excited their fears. The warmth of their thanksgivings baffles the power of language to describe; but the thoughts of those who were not spared to behold the day, added great bitterness to the general joy. Both Naarveldt and De Wencke regretted the absence of at least two familiar faces, and pondered with sorrow over the fate of those dear to them, of whom they would hear nothing. At the time of the raising of the siege, according to some authors, there remained but one hundred and seven muids of wheat in the town, although, probably, even this is over-rated; and one-third of the people had died by famine or pestilence. The day of so unexampled deliverance is still observed with thanksgiving by the citizens of Leyden.

CHAPTER XIX.

Showing how the Count of Staelburg was delivered over to the Inquisition; how he found out an old Acquaintance in the Torturer of the Holy Office, and the grievous Accident which befel the latter.

APOLOGISING to the readers for the unwarrantable disregard for the "lucidus ordo" of which we have been guilty, in directing attention to the minor actors of the scene, instead of to the hero of our tale, we will attempt, in some measure, to rectify our

ror, by informing them of what befel Jophbert in his captivity. Valdez, rejoiced at having obtained even so slight advantage as the capture of two prisoners, quickly informed Requesens of his success; and the latter—who, although supposed to be more merciful than Alva, knew but little of “the quality of mercy which is not strained”—ordered them forthwith to be sent in close custody to Spain, there to be dealt with by the spiritual arm as formal heretics, unless it should please the powers that were to direct otherwise. The mandate was speedily acted upon, and Jophbert and Alfrude, under the care of a few troopers, were transmitted, partly by land and partly by sea, to the mother country,—the Spaniards, perhaps, considering any prison in the Low Countries insecure. It was, doubtless, well for them that their capture took place when the Spaniards looked with certainty to the surrender of the town: had it been otherwise, the rage of their captors at failing in their attempts to reduce Leyden would have vented itself upon them. The troopers who guarded them preserving a sullen silence, no persuasions could induce them to give any information as to the probable fate of themselves or friends. Their landing took place at Bilboa, where the unfortunate captives were assigned to separate places of confinement. Notwithstanding Jophbert was kindly treated, he failed in ascertaining any clue to his ultimate destination. The leader of the escort still displayed the same reserve on the point, and Jophbert placed a very unfavourable construction upon his silence. To increase his distress, on the party resuming their march the following day, he found that his former companion in captivity was not with them. For this movement he was quite unprepared; he could suggest no reason for the separation, and his actutum guard would offer none. He feared it was impossible that she could have effected an escape; but he trusted that the gallantry peculiar to the real Spanish character would prevent any of that nation from behaving with severity towards her.

As town after town, and village after village, was passed, Jophbert became aware that he was an object of great interest to the inhabitants; and, although but slightly acquainted with the Spanish language, from the expressions of sympathy, not

unmixed with those of abhorrence, which he heard, he was led to suppose that his fate was a more rigorous one than that of the generality of prisoners of war.

It was at the close of the day, when the shades of night were beginning to fall, that the prisoner and guard arrived at a large town, where their approach excited little interest. A halt was made at the entrance of a large building of sombre appearance, where admittance was readily granted to the leader of the party and his subordinates. Here, as the soldiers prepared to assist the prisoner from his steed, poor Jophbert, whose debilitated frame was no longer able to bear up the excitement and fatigue he had gone through, fell into a swoon. On recovering possession of his senses, he found himself in a small but well-ventilated apartment, where the thick bars which shaded the windows prevented the ingress of what little light still remained with the inhabitants of the outer world. Scarcely had the unfortunate soldier cast his eyes round his dreary prison, ere a grating sound of the huge lock was heard, and a man of anything but prepossessing appearance entered, bearing a solitary taper, and a small tray containing some refreshment. Our hero hurriedly asked where he was, and what it was the intention of his captors to do with him. The jailor calmly placed the taper and refreshment on a table, and muttered some words in Spanish, which were perfectly unintelligible to Jophbert; but the manner in which they were uttered led him to expect no mercy from his keeper. Finding his attempts at conversation vain, the jailor pointed to the eatables he had brought, and motioned to Staelburg (as we may now again call our hero) to partake of food. As he turned away from them in disgust, the officer slowly stated that his future opportunities for eating might be few. This the prisoner could easily understand; but, in his confused state, he was unable fully to comprehend his allusion. The jailor then withdrew, after having assured himself that the door was properly fastened with the enormous chains and bolts which were annexed to it. His absence, however, was not of long duration: he speedily returned, bringing with him some changes of raiment, which were much needed. Motioning to the pallet, which occu-

pied the larger part of the prison, he took up the taper, and left poor Staelburg to console himself to his adversity as best he might. It is said that Indians, when in the power of their enemies, employ in repose the brief intervals between periods of torture. If it be possible to enjoy slumber when at the succeeding moment the sleeper may be awakened to undergo such torments as the cruelty of his captors may decide on, it may easily be supposed that Staelburg, who had never quite recovered from the debility occasioned by famine and pestilence at Leyden, soon betook himself to rest. A deep and heavy sleep came over him, and confused visions flitted across his mind. He saw himself standing almost on the crater of a volcano, whence fire and smoke were issuing in volumes, while fiends in all sizes and forms which the most imaginative fancy could suggest were urging him onwards. One in particular, whose distorted features were familiar to his mind, was endeavouring to precipitate him into the abyss. The goblin had the advantage, and was about to hurl him into the abyss, when a light form appeared and rebuked the fiend, who, giving a yell of piercing anguish, spread his wings and flew away, followed by his kindred spirits, whose riotous laughter almost deadened the wild cry of the first. His deliverer then took him by the hand, and led him from the spot. A glare from the volcano, unlike the previous lurid flashes, but pure and brilliant, revealed to him the well-known face of his beloved Bertha. Then succeeded strains of the most exquisite music, so soft and sweet that they seemed to have no connexion with earth; after which the sleeper awoke. Alas, poor exile! what remains for thee? Instead of the pleasing ideas suggested by the latter part of thy dream, thou art still a captive in a dungeon, exposed to dangers of the magnitude of which you are ignorant,—in an unknown land, where thy ears, like those of the persecuted Joseph, hear a strange language. At present the fulfilment of the vision seems anything but probable: let us hope it may not be long deferred.

Notwithstanding the sad disappointment occasioned by the change from most delightful visions to gloomy reality, the young Count's mind took hope from the omen; and he pondered over

the last time he left the fair being who now acted as his guardian angel. He remembered his promise—of her image being ever with him to comfort and encourage him. He thought also of his last evening at home, his mental conflict, and his solemn vow of patience and submission, taken, as it were, almost in the presence of his ancestors.

As he donned his attire, he found himself deprived of almost all the contents of his pockets at the time of his imprisonment, which, he presumed, had been removed during his unconsciousness. As soon as the duties of the toilet had been hurriedly performed, his grave attendant once more made his appearance with his morning repast, consisting of a kind of broth with bread. On this occasion the jailor seemed slightly more communicative, and, in reply to his repeated inquiries, informed him that he was then in Valladolid, and that the present place of his confinement was none other than the secret prison of the Holy Office. In spite of his general fortitude, a cold shudder came over the unfortunate noble as he heard that he was now completely at the mercy of the most pitiless tribune in the world, not even excepting those institutions perpetuated in romances and tragedies,—the secret associations of Germany. Not wishing the jailor to consider him a craven, he again demanded, in a mixture of German, Dutch, and Spanish, the doom that awaited him, and the period fixed for its infliction. To this, the official doggedly stated that a voluntary confession of the heavy charges brought against him would be the only means of mitigating the just indignation of the inquisitors, when perhaps his life (forfeited for his crimes) might, through their mercy, be spared. Prepared for the worst, as far as he was concerned, Staelburg inquired whether any female was incarcerated at the same time as himself. The jailor made no answer to this, but, putting his finger on his lips as a token of silence, withdrew. As our hero once more heard the door shut upon him, he could not divest himself of the idea that it would open to him only on the road to torture or execution.

"The fear of ill exceeds the ill we dread," says Tasso; and if it were possible to form any ideas of the horrors of the Inquisition which the real facts of the case might not warrant, the

unfortunate German, reared in a land where persecution and bigotry had not predominated so much as in Spain, would have been a fit person to form such ideas. He had abundant time to reflect on the perils of his position: not even a missal or the works of any orthodox Romanist were placed so as to invite perusal, and assist him in his devotions. He made a narrow inspection of his cell, to ascertain if there were any means of communication with his fellow-captives; but all his endeavours were vain: the solid walls betrayed no crevice, and no sound of life reached his ears. He was altogether unenlightened with regard to the species of examination he might have to undergo, and he greatly feared that, with a cruelty exceeding even that of Donysius, the Inquisitors of the Holy Office might detain him in close captivity, perhaps in dungeons, to which his present prison were freedom, till it suited their pleasure to make an end of him. What tortures they thought fit to practise, as a prelude to his death, he knew not; but he had no need to imagine that he who had assisted with all his energies to crush the power of domineering Spain would be lightly treated by its chief spiritual engine. To the enjoyment of these melancholy reflections it suited the superior of the Inquisition to leave him for some few days, during which the visits of the jailor were the only incidents that roused him from his meditations. Probably, from pressure of business on their hands, or it might have been with the intention of letting solitude exercise its influence on the prisoner, the Inquisitors did not summon him to an audience until nearly a week had elapsed since his incarceration. He was then ordered by the jailor to follow him. Summoning all his fortitude to his assistance, the captive followed him to the chamber of audience, where were assembled the Inquisitors, the Promoter-Fiscal of the Holy Office,—a notary, whose office it was to take down in writing the statements made by the accused,—and a few more officials. Notwithstanding the trepidation the young noble felt on appearing before them, he was almost glad that there was some probability of his ascertaining the worst. Contrary to his expectations, he was greeted in a courteous, yet formal, manner by the chief Inquisitor, who desired him to take a seat. The

others seemed engrossed in deep thought, and in their heavy, forbidding countenances Staelburg looked in vain for any spark of pity. After a denunciation by the promoter against the prisoner as a heretic, during which the latter remained standing, an oath was dictated to him by the notary, to speak the truth on this and all subsequent occasions. The Chief Inquisitor then made some minute inquiries as to his name, country, and condition. To this our hero answered, that in Germany, his native country, he was known as Augustus, Count of Staelburg, in the Margravate of Baden-Baden. Without evincing any astonishment, the interrogator proceeded to inquire whether the accused had ever gone by any assumed name, and if so, when, and for what purpose he had done so. Staelburg had a great inclination to demur to this question, as foreign to the matter; but fearing any reserve on such a point would operate prejudicially to him, he answered that, to avoid the notice of certain persons at enmity with him, he had been induced to adopt the name of Jophbert, and that the period of his so doing was immediately after his quitting Germany, about two years ago. On hearing this, the Inquisitor demanded the reason which had induced him to quit his home. The Count then proceeded to inform him of the circumstances attending his departure, as far as appeared convenient. He was afterwards questioned on his motives in combating those who had not injured him, the steps he had taken in the defence of the revolted provinces against the regal authority, the people with whom he lodged, and the religious services which he and they had attended. To the first of these inquiries, the young Count pleaded his ambition for military distinction, and the desire of every chivalrous heart to assist the weak against the strong. To the second, he enumerated, not without some pardonable degree of pride, the services he had rendered the Dutch. To the third, he stated that his host was one Mynheer Naarveldt, a man apparently of great piety. To the other point, he added that, being unable to join in religious exercises with those of his own persuasion, he had, on some occasions, attended Protestant places of worship. With regard to the faith professed by Naarveldt and his family, he stated that, being received into that family

as a man of courage and honour, he did not wish to give his generous entertainer any opinion of his being otherwise. An expression of great disapprobation came over the Inquisitor's face as he heard these bold words, and he paused as if to collect his ideas. After giving time to the notary to write the previous statements of the accused, he began to demand the number of Naarveldt's household, and whether Staelburg had not accompanied either of them to any heretical assembly. The prisoner answered indignantly that it was utterly at variance with every principle of justice to make an accused bear testimony to his own prejudice, but that, in a process commenced against himself, to compel him to give evidence to the detriment of those who had treated him with confidence, was such an infringement of the rites of hospitality as he could not sanction. The interrogator made a careful note of this answer, and reminded Staelburg, in a threatening manner, of the oath he had just taken, and the punishment which would attend any violation of it. Probably aware that any further allusion to the subject was unwarranted by the Draco-like laws under which the Holy Office feigned to act, the Inquisitor dropped the question, and after a whispered conversation with his coadjutors, informed the accused that his first examination was terminated.

The prisoner was then requested to annex his signature to the minutes made by the notary, the same having been previously read over to him; after which he was conducted by the jailor to his own cell. Here once more he devoted considerable time to a calm reflection of the dangers which surrounded him, and the only means of extricating himself therefrom. As for himself, he scorned to use deception, and his examiners were welcome to every particular of his previous life; but should they persist in making inquiries into such of the affairs of others as he had come under his notice, he resolved to incur the full brunt of their resentment, rather than gratify their curiosity. He was not without some idea that Alfrude Naarveldt might then be immured in a prison similar to his own, exposed to like treatment; and, in addition to other arguments, if such were needed, to prompt him to confine his disclosures to his own acts, he

pictured to himself her probable conduct when interrogated as to his own principles. He knew that the noble-minded girl, who had so attentively waited on him in sickness, would not act treacherously to him now; and his generous nature revolted at the idea of purchasing immunity from torture at any price resembling either ingratitude or abandonment of principle. However, he had the melancholy consolation of thinking that his own fate could scarcely admit of any increase of misfortune, since, isolated from his friends, and ignorant of the rules of the tribunal persecuting him, nothing remained but to submit to the tortures and sentence decreed, the termination of which must ultimately be death, or to conciliate the Inquisitors by a denunciation of all whom he had known, as professing doctrines at variance with the Roman Catholic religion. The only person from whose interference any benefit could be anticipated might be his former acquaintance, Don Pedro; yet so mysterious were the practices of the Inquisition, that there was but little chance of the news of his captivity reaching the ears of his friend, who, indeed, had probably no influence over the savage Inquisitors. Annoyed with his own reflections, yet without any other means of occupying time, the unhappy captive knew not what to do. Fortunately for him, the jailor again made his appearance, bearing the writings of Ignatius Loyola, in Latin, which, he stated, the Inquistors, as a special act of grace, had permitted him to read.

Glad of any method of breaking off his unpleasant train of thought, Staelburg thankfully accepted the works, and was soon so deeply engaged in a perusal of them as to remove any doubts of the soundness of his belief from the mind of his keeper.

It was not long ere he received a second summons to undergo an examination by the Inquisitors. He found them again assembled in the hall of audience, with the usual complement of notaries, &c. The superior, after alluding to the oath taken by the accused, on all occasions, to speak the truth concerning the matters in question, expressed his regret that a person of such rank and apparent abilities should be so far wanting in respect for the Church as to be wilfully guilty of assisting heretics, at the time when she had so much need of the assistance of all her sons

to repress the growing spirit of schism ; and urged him to make a free confession of all offences committed by him against the Holy Catholic faith. The Inquisitor was firmly assured that, as Staelburg's conscience reproached him for no intentional breach of duty, he was unable to confess any.

"Perverted man," said the angry official ; "think you that the Holy Office, whose judgments are in all respects tempered with mercy, even to the most obdurate, would make any inquiry into your past habits of life without due cause. Denial can suppress nothing, since such proofs are in our power as will give the lie to any assertion you can make. By a humble and sincere confession alone can you hope to avert the wrath of the Church, and be again admitted, through repentance and works of abasement, into her fold. To quote a book which should not be lightly alluded to before the uninstructed laity, I would state that 'Satan hath desired to have you that he may sift you as wheat.' Save yourself, body and soul ; and beware, lest the anathemas of the Church deprive you both of temporal existence and eternal hope."

"I repeat," said the young Count, "that, as far as I have been enabled, I have shown all due respect for the Catholic Church, of which I am a member. As to your threat of depriving me of temporal and eternal life, what says the Bible ? 'Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell.'"

Here the Inquisitor shook his head mournfully, as if despairing of making any impression on a person so violently affected with heresy as to read the Bible. Having, however, duly observed the quotation in his minutes, as a circumstance adverse to the prisoner, he proceeded to inquire whether a leaning to heterodox opinions had been observable in previous members of the family of Staelburg, or whether the prisoner was the first who had favoured heresy. To elucidate this question, he demanded an account of the principles and faith of as many of Staelburg's forefathers as he could call to mind.

In a very clear manner the accused informed them of the life of his father, and his death in battle ; after which he went as far

into the family pedigree as his imperfect remembrance of the steward's legends would permit.

"What!" said the official, in amazement: "is it possible, that the example of so illustrious a man as the Count of whom you speak, can be so far lost upon you, that you should be found fighting against the cause in defence of which your father fell?"

"If I am rightly informed," replied Staelburg, "the charges of which this court takes cognizance are of a spiritual, not a secular nature. If my offence consists in bearing arms against Spain, I demand the privileges of a prisoner of war. My father, in his lifetime, assisted Spain to weaken the dangerous power of the Pope and his allies. Now, Spain and the Pope are in too close alliance for the interests of Christendom; and it has pleased me to lend assistance to men of a different persuasion, suffering injustice from the temporal power of the King, and the spiritual yoke of the Pope. Should I have acted with imprudence in this matter, so far from treating my departure from my father's opinions as an additional cause of punishment, I would submit the merits of the father should be set against the defaults (if any) of the son."

"You are forward," said the Inquisitor; "and interfere in matters of which you know nothing. Do not provoke me to a course of severity with you. The truth must be extracted, and I have the power of resorting to other measures, besides entreaty, with you. You say you left Baden, and travelled towards Leyden:—in whose company were you?"

"Partly in that of one Frederick Hophman, a member of the University of Tübingen, who came, as he informed me, to practise chirurgery among the wounded of the Dutch army."

Many questions, some entirely impertinent to the subject, were put; to all of which, in a calm and composed manner, Staelburg answered carefully, restricting his replies to his own conduct.

He was then dismissed, with a hint that his answers, on the present examination, were of a very unsatisfactory nature, and that unless, on the next audience, he practised greater sincerity, he would be proceeded against with the utmost rigour.

Another audience was soon after held, in which the interro-

gations were very similar to the previous ones. Staelburg was, however, called upon to recite certain portions of the Latin service, to prove his instruction therein. Many attempts were made to induce him to reveal what he knew of Mynheer Naarveldt; but, finding him obdurate, the Inquisitor made an allusion to the implements of torture which it was possible to employ, and still again urged the advantages to be derived from an ingenuous confession.

Lastly, the Inquisitor asked if the prisoner was aware of the particular crimes which had come under the notice of the Holy Office. He was informed that the accused was entirely ignorant of the offences he had committed, unless it were the vague charge of assisting Protestants in a war against Romanists.

At the request of the superior of the Office, he then particularised his enemies as the Count of Würmer and his son.

At the termination of this examination, no further interview was demanded of him for some time; during which, Staelburg employed himself in forming conjectures as to the probable magnitude of the crimes laid to his charge, and the evidence used to support them. He had heard that the Inquisition had countless familiars actively engaged in noting down all circumstances, whether of apparent importance or not, in the conduct of their unsuspecting victim. Had any such made him the object of their skill? He could call to mind several occasions when he had spoken with more truth than prudence of the faults of the Romish establishment in general, and of the Inquisition in particular; but as all his remarks on the subject had been made in private, he could scarcely think that the spies of that mysterious tribunal could be aware of them.

Staelburg at length was called upon to attend the Inquisitors, and enter into a defence of the weighty crimes brought against him. In consequence of the rank and the supposed magnitude of the guilt of the culprit, great attention was paid to the preparation of the accusation against him; and a host of the officials attended to watch the progress of the trial. The Promoter-Fiscal produced a roll of great length, whence he proceeded to state the different counts with which the accused was charged. In addi-

tion to the general crime of being a heretic, there were a variety of offences specified, such as deliberately insulting the Holy Office; communing with known schismatics; attending heretical assemblies; reading prohibited books; burying the corpses of parties at variance with the Church; and, amongst others, sorcery, and a compact with the devil. The torture was casually spoken of as the means of extorting additional evidence from the accused. These several charges having been read over to Staelburg, he was commanded to reply to them according to his ability. The Promoter, having previously borne oath to the rectitude of his motives in prosecuting the charges, withdrew while the prisoner made his replies, to give some slight appearance of justice to the parody on equity they were enacting. As, however, Staelburg, from his ignorance of the practice, was in no position to enter into a detailed defence, or even to reply in a judicious manner to the denunciation, as a special favour, an advocate, of rather more ingenuous mien than the majority of his brethren, was appointed to answer for, and assist him to the best of his skill. With great tact the advocate (after swearing to deal faithfully towards his client) added the answers, which, on a hurried consultation before the Inquisitors, appeared expedient. These were, a denial of such of the accusations as were utterly untrue, and an admission and justification of all such as contained any truth. So skilfully were they framed, that although many far-fetched inferences were drawn from casual remarks made by the prisoner, and gross exaggeration attended the whole, it was difficult for Staelburg to separate the true from the false, so as to enter upon any defence of his conduct; while the multiplicity of the charges could only be accounted for on the supposition that the same offence furnished ground for several accusations. The advocate, as in duty bound, pointed out to Staelburg the advantage of making any admissions which might induce the Inquisitors to act with leniency towards him. After these preliminary steps had been taken, the Promoter-Fiscal demanded, on behalf of the prosecution, the proofs of the allegations contained in his accusation; and the Holy Office prepared to examine witnesses to substantiate their case. As this must be a work of time, and it was contrary to

every rule of the Inquisition to let the accused know anything of the evidence brought against him, he was again remanded.

The evidence on the part of the prosecution being completed, and the depositions of the witnesses ratified according to the forms observed by the Holy Office, the Inquisitors proceeded to inform the accused of so much of their substance as might serve to alarm him, and lead him to suppose his case was hopeless, without in any manner informing him of the names or character of his accusers. He found, to his amazement, that the depositions charged him with aiding and counselling one Marcus Malavox in his designs on the Romish faith, expressing himself opposed to the introduction of the Holy Office in the Netherlands, and maligning the ministers of religion in his presence; also assisting in the interment of that arch-heretic; and, further, with having consulted Frederick Hophman, a magician and necromancer, as to future events; together with many other offences, varying in magnitude.

After having communicated replies as guarded as possible to these and other matters deposed to by the witnesses, he was suffered to have a further consultation with his adviser in the presence of an Inquisitor, in order to deliberate on the means of defence.

His adviser, who was a man of as much honesty as was tolerable in an officer of the Inquisition, did not conceal from him the danger which menaced him, and strongly urged him to accept humbly the absolution afforded to repentant sinners, and perform such acts of penance as should be required of him. His suggestions not being complied with, he proceeded to make inquiries as to the persons whom Staelburg could summon to bear witness to his orthodoxy, and the abhorrence in which he held heretical practices. To this Staelburg could only protest his own innocence, as he felt it impossible to produce any evidence of the fact. His advocate reminded him that, in the event of the proceedings terminating in an adverse manner, he could not be held responsible for the result; and retired to consider the best means to be taken, accompanied by the Inquisitor.

Staelburg's last pleas—which, being framed with great prudence, were very distasteful to the Holy Office—underwent considerable criticism at the hands of the Inquisitors, who, finding

that it was difficult to prevail on the prisoner to criminate either himself or others, resolved to employ the torture. With this view they summoned him to a further audience, when he was again pressed to divulge whatever he had known amiss in the conduct of those with whom he associated at Leyden. They argued that, even in the case of his own brother, it was unlawful to have more care for the body than the soul, which latter would be undoubtedly lost in the event of contempt of the Inquisition.

"Wherein," said Staelburg—his disgust at their overtures getting the better of his prudence—"does your conduct differ from that of Saul, who exercised himself in haling men and women bound unto prison, and of whom the heavenly voice said, 'Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?' Your proceedings being in direct opposition to the principles of the Bible, which bids us 'be wise as serpents, but harmless as doves,' I see not the danger to my soul in refusing to act the part of a liar towards myself, and a traitor towards my friends."

"And have you, then, presumed to inspect books reserved only for the opinions of learned and devout men?" said the enraged Inquisitor. "The statements you have now made are alone sufficient to justify your condemnation as a formal heretic. Is not the Holy Inquisition, of which I am an unworthy servant, under the especial protection of God's vicegerent on earth? and even admitting the bold propositions you have made, have you not heard that the Pontiff has power to change the laws of God?"

Staelburg was about to protest warmly against this doctrine, when, on a signal from the Inquisitor, two stalwart executioners forcibly gagged him, and conveyed him to the torture-chamber, where, his mouth being freed, he was shown the instruments of punishment, and again exhorted to confess. The surgeon of the Office then entered the apartment, and held a whispered conversation with the Chief Inquisitor. At the close of this consultation, the latter motioned to the masked functionaries to bring the thumb-screws, and employ them as a means of reducing the accused to a becoming state of mind. These, with considerable care, were affixed to the thin hands of the unfortunate Count; while a notary, with great composure, arranged his writing-ma-

terials, so as to take down any expressions which the torture might wring from him. The surgeon placed himself in a position to watch the effect which the operation might have upon the victim, and one of the executioners commenced gradually to contract the screws to the required degree. Nothing but the blanched cheek and tightly compressed lips of the prisoner testified the agony inflicted upon him; and, used as the Inquisitors were to assumed determination, they became aware that they were dealing with a person of no ordinary resolution. The torturer was commanded to cease for an instant his avocation, while another appeal was made to the accused. The Inquisitor pointed out the repugnance the Holy Office had to resort to extreme measures, and her earnest desire to effect a reconciliation with mistaken members of the Church; and assured Staelburg that, even then, a full confession and repentance would procure his release. Scarcely able to speak, the unhappy Staelburg could but shake his head in token of refusal. As the tightness of compression occasioned by the thumb-screws was likely to produce very dangerous results on the weak frame of the prisoner, the surgeon commanded a suspension of the torment, not, however, until the violence of the pressure had forced the blood from the injured members. In order to enable Staelburg to undergo any further application of the question, a little water was dashed in his face, and he was allowed a short time to brace his nerves for a further trial. The other tormentor, whose burly figure Staelburg thought he had seen before, went to the opposite extremity of the room, to adjust the various implements of coercion there.

While the surgeon was again impressing upon the Inquisitor his ideas of the physical strength of the prisoner, a most piercing, unearthly shriek reached their ears. Poor Staelburg, who, exhausted with pain, had almost sunk into unconsciousness, was roused by its wildness; and it instantly reminded him of his fearful dream at the commencement of his imprisonment. The second executioner and the Inquisitor rushed to the spot, and returned bearing a man bleeding intensely from numerous wounds about the body, and still screaming in a most awful manner. The wounded wretch was the other tormentor, whose mask falling

off, revealed to Staelburg the coarse features of Michael the spy. He could then form some idea of the cause of his captivity, and the witness whose testimony was the chief, if not the only, evidence against him; and he was thus, in so frightful a manner, permitted to behold a severe retribution on the author of his misfortunes. Michael, the better to serve his employers, the Würmers, had formed the plan of handing over the object of their hatred to the mercies of the Holy Office, with which view he had procured himself to be admitted first as a familiar of the institution, in which capacity he zealously engaged himself in obtaining proofs of guilt against Staelburg; and, since his apprehension, had devoted so much attention to the mechanical instruments of the Inquisition, and displayed so much skill in their application, as to be appointed one of the tormentors of the prisoners. He had, it appeared, been engaged in preparing a draped female figure, covered with spiked knives, for the reception of those condemned to the question, when, accidentally disarranging the works, he became his own executioner, and received wounds of a most dangerous nature.

The luckless Michael was at once carried from the torture-chamber, to undergo medical treatment; and the Inquisitors, greatly alarmed at the accident which had befallen their accomplished tormentor, adjourned further administration of the question until a more convenient season. Staelburg, accordingly, was removed to the secret prison, there to remain till it should please the Inquisitors further to prosecute the subject.

CHAPTER XX.

In which the Reader is directed to the Proceedings of our Friends in Germany.

FORTUNATELY for writers of fiction, the rules of the Greek drama^{*}, requiring uniformity of time and place, are not now strictly insisted upon; and we trust the reader will pardon us if we request him to give his attention to what is passing amongst

those characters of our tale resident in Baden. For this purpose we will conduct him to a new scene—the mansion of Rockenforth, the seat of the Count of Würmer and his exemplary son. When we last took leave of the latter, he was, if we mistake not, in some doubt as to the best means to be practised to accomplish certain plans of his fertile mind. Considerable time having elapsed since these projects first underwent consideration, it will, perhaps, be interesting to observe what progress they have been making towards completion.

It was evening at Rockenforth, and the Count and his son were met in one of the scantily furnished apartments of the castle, preparing to partake of the repast, which, no doubt, the good deeds of the day had richly merited. The Count was a man of middle size, dressed in a style quite in conformity with Shakespeare's famous maxim. Time had set its mark on his once-flowing hair, and the furrows of age were manifest on his brow. His eyes were rather small, and would give an acute observer the idea of great activity. Nevertheless, they possessed an appearance of quiet benevolence, and, to any one not an accomplished physiognomist, the deportment of the aged noble would convey an impression of his being an unassuming, yet energetic, benefactor of the human race in general, who had probably retired from a useful course in the world, to end his days in peace. Such was the exterior of this intriguing Count; but it is to be feared, from his conduct on many occasions, that, in some instances, nature had not designed the countenance to be the index of the mind. His son sat near him, and on his sombre features dwelt a frown, which seemed to show that there were still certain difficulties to be surmounted, before he could effect the desires of his mind. Ambition and cupidity are as insatiable as the horse-leech's two daughters, and when their votary thinks nothing prevents the attainment of his goal, the cry of "Give, give," still haunts him. Can it be that their famed devotee, Conrad Würmer, has become the victim of their rapacity? After having demanded so much of him, do they still crave for greater exertions on their behalf?

To be candid with the reader, Albert's *ruse* had called forth

the reasoning powers of the Baron to an unwonted degree. As he scarcely knew which of the plans he had formed was the most feasible, he resolved to ask counsel of his clear-headed progenitor, in whom, as a good son, he had great confidence. Before, however, he could engage his father in conversation on the subject, the servant entered, to prepare for supper; and the discussion of the important matter was postponed until the conclusion of the repast. The viands produced were not of the most costly description, neither was the wine of the best possible quality, nor very abundant in quantity; nevertheless, being accustomed to practise self-denial, or rather avarice, both worthies (in their way) fared sumptuously, and appeared content with such things as they had. When their appetites were satisfied, both drew near the fire, which, indeed, was of no extravagant size, and appeared engaged in thought on subjects of great moment. The elder noble, whose mind seemed to have a great aversion to rest, was the first to think of business, and having extracted a paper from an adjacent chest, he made a minute inspection of it. From the earnest manner in which he ran over his fingers, and nodded his head, it was evident some proposition in arithmetic was foremost in his thoughts. Having ultimately completed his calculation, and the fire (by the light of which he had made his investigations) getting rather low, he placed the document on the table, and, turning to his son, who had displayed a most laudable absence of curiosity, said, in a clear, sonorous voice:

“I have been looking over a plan of the estates of our neighbour, Hardfels, in order to form my own opinion of the value, both to him and to us. It seems that, his fair daughter being removed from our sight, we must give up all hopes of acquiring any addition to our little property by a marriage between her and yourself. Nevertheless, I was considering that our purpose might be effected by other methods than that. You informed me that Hardfels insulted you. Vengeance is sweet: there is still a way of humbling him effectually.

Having given a furtive glance around the room, and ascertained no one was near the door, the son answered: “To tell you the truth, my thoughts were in the same direction; and I was

cogitating the most desirable method of punishing him for his perfidy and insolence towards us, without hazarding our interests."

The Count gave a further nod, in approbation of his hopeful son's suggestion, over which he mused for some time; at last, with an air of exultation, he exclaimed: "The imperial chamber! Let us go boldly to extremities: half-measures are useless."

The crafty Conrad Würmer, as he heard these mysterious words, was betrayed into a great manifestation of joy; but, on reflection, he added: "How would such a course benefit us?"

"What, Conrad!" said the Count; "do you not see that, by denouncing Hardfels before the Emperor, you secure his condemnation, and the confiscation of his estates, the greater part of which will, of course, be the reward of the informer. You may do what you like with regard to that proud son of his; but, by adopting my plan, you, without difficulty to yourself, get rid of our most powerful enemy in a style which does you credit. I then foretel you wealth, honour, magnificence, and, perhaps, a bride little less than a princess!"

"You speak with justice," said the Baron; "your proposal is a bold, but, I hope, a safe one. To broach the subject to the Emperor would be to sentence Hardfels to a disgraceful death, and procure considerable advantage to ourselves. I have some wish, though, to let the matter rest till I have news of the fate of that troublesome Staelburg. Unless we succeed in quieting him, I feel we may find ourselves foiled, when we expect nothing else but success. Michael promised to inform me, by a trusty messenger, of what progress he was making. Either some harm has happened to him, or he has forgotten his promise. On hearing from him, I will at once proceed to put into effect your sage counsel. But," he continued in a different tone, "may it not be said that we have assisted him in his treason by not revealing our knowledge of it at an earlier opportunity? After a lapse of some ten years, does it not seem dangerous to proceed now?"

"Nonsense!" said the Count. "What is easier than to say that, having frustrated Hardfels' treacherous projects, your weak love for the misguided man prevented you from revealing them;

but that now, overwhelmed with remorse for your misconduct, you are resolved to submit the whole affair to the judgment of the Emperor? Disclaim all ill-will to the accused; shed a few tears, if necessary; and the matter is settled."

"I fear many persons might have more doubts on the subject than yourself. Nevertheless, I should think our united testimony on oath would suffice to invalidate any counter protest on his part. But, again, what business have we with any of Hardfels' private correspondence? He will at once demand how we became possessed of any documents we may put in against him. I fear me, now, we must betake ourselves to other and less dangerous methods of revenge."

"Trust that to me, Conrad. Could you not say that some one of the Baron's domestics confided you with the secret of his being the bearer of a mysterious letter, which he volunteered to show you, in order to obtain some insight into its contents, and the danger he was incurring in delivering it? We had better take care that the man we speak of be now dead. Dead men tell no tales. The page whose place Michael took, if I mistake not, died in Hardfels' service."

"Be it so," said young Würmer, in a stern manner. "Great care is required; but I trust our prudence may surmount any difficulties the ruined wretch may raise."

Here both relapsed into a fit of abstraction, and it was evident they were devoting their best energies to the consideration of the means to be pursued to accomplish their purpose. This reverie, however, was disturbed by the ingress of the before-mentioned servant, who announced the arrival of a courier from Spain, with a letter for the Baron. He was instantly admitted, and the intelligence of which he was the bearer afforded great satisfaction to both father and son. We must do Würmer's generosity the credit of stating that, on this occasion, he bestowed upon the bearer a remuneration equal to his deserts; and the messenger left the apartment, to partake of refreshments with the few servants of the establishment.

Michael duly informed his patron of his proceedings since he last communicated with him; his dealings with the Inquisition;

and the arrest of the young Count; as well as his own appointment of executioner to the Holy Office; and added, that there was not the slightest doubt that the prisoner would be condemned to relaxation at the approaching *auto-da-fé*.

So overjoyed was the old Count at this seasonable intelligence, that he ordered his attendant to bring in a whole bottle of best Moselle, for himself and son to drink success to the Inquisition. Great was the hilarity of the respectable party (who certainly had abundant cause for joy); and the servant, who seldom received an order to produce so large a quantity of wine, could but surmise that his master had heard some news of great interest.

Between such excellent men of business, it was not long before every particular in the fate of Hardfels was discussed and settled; and it was decided that, since delay might be prejudicial, and all seemed favourable for the execution of their designs, Conrad Würmer should proceed at the earliest opportunity to Vienna, there to prefer a charge of treason against the unfortunate Baron of Hardfels, to be supported by certain proofs in their possession. *Circumspecte agite*, friend Würmer: beware, lest you attempt impossibilities, and the snare which you laid privily catch yourself!

Having in this systematic manner disposed of Hardfels and his fortunes, Würmer and his son retired to rest, to enjoy, no doubt, that repose for which their honest industry had prepared them.

On the following morning, when the meeting of father and son again took place, neither seemed in such good spirits as on the previous night. There was a certain haggardness of appearance and wildness of manner about them, which testified that their rest had not been so unbroken as we imagined. The old noble plainly perceived, from the sorrowful aspect of his generally composed son, that all was not right, and demanded the cause of his dejection.

Conrad answered, in a mournful tone: "Your desire shall be obeyed. Last night a loud noise aroused me from my sleep. I awoke, and beheld a shadowy figure, dressed in the same habits as myself, and presenting the same general appearance, standing at the foot of my bed. My hair stood on end, and I endeavoured to call out, but was unable to utter. The spectre then imitated

a passing bell, and sung a requiem in sepulchral tones. He afterwards vanished suddenly through the floor, bidding me prepare to follow him. A cold sweat came over me, and I lay in dread and anguish until morning."

"Nonsense, boy! nonsense!" said the father, with a hoarse laugh. "Your vision arose from the fumes of the strong wine you drank over night. I advise you to be more cautious in future. Are you, my resolute son, turned dastard? Is the blood of the Würmer's turned into water? It was always said of the family, that nothing fleshly or spiritual could deter one of its members from his purpose. Do not be an exception to the well-established rule. Take courage! your death will not happen until your enemies have felt your power."

The Baron had by this time recovered his ordinary composure, and, on his father's repeated entreaties, consented to perform the office of accuser of Hardfels, which he at first seemed much disposed to reject. Seeing, however, that the Count betrayed rather more agitation than he was wont to display, Conrad, in his turn, demanded what had occurred to mar his serenity.

The old man's eye lost its usual mild aspect, and assumed an expression of intense woe, as he replied: "The wine also disturbed my sleep. I dreamt I saw the widowed Matilda Haldenheim stand near me, and reprove me bitterly for neglecting my last promise to her."

Conrad stared with amazement at his father's revelation, and inquired of him the substance of the promise made.

As if fearful of being overheard, the hoary sinner drew his son aside, and whispered in his ear for some few seconds, at the expiration of which the Baron laughed; but it was a forced, discordant laugh, as he bid his father be of good cheer, for that no harm could overtake him.

Having succeeded in dispelling the gloom which their fearful visions had produced, both partook of breakfast with as much appetite as remained to them; after which the Baron of Würmer, bearing a small casket carefully locked with him, prepared to start for Vienna, to take the necessary steps for the accomplishment of the ruin of the Baron of Hardfels.

CHAPTER XXI.

Wherein it is proved that Music bath charms to soothe the savage breast; and an opportunity of Escape is offered to Staelburg, who, however, declines to avail himself of it.

HAVING thus made a temporary digression from our subject, we will betake ourselves to a consideration of the events which happened at Valladolid after the misfortune which befel Michael. The Inquisitors, having been busily engaged in the trial of numerous heretics, had a prospect of enjoying some slight rest from their labours, and the pleasure afforded by a suspension of active exertions was common both to the superiors and subordinates of the Holy Office. The latter were assembled in the refectory of the Inquisition, indulging in a copious libation after their laudable efforts in the extirpation of heresy.

Michael had never been a favourite with his associates. He was suspicious and selfish, even for a familiar and tormentor of the Inquisition; and from possessing cunning superior to his station, was an object of aversion, both to his employers and assistants, so that the remembrance of his accident did nothing more than add to the merriment of his unfeeling coadjutors. Bottles of the rich wines of Oporto and Xeres were standing on the table, and every arrangement had been made by the minor officials for a jubilee. As if arrived purposely to increase their mirth, a minstrel was announced, with harp and song, ready to treat on any subject. The new-comer was joyfully admitted, and the various officials of the Inquisition gathered round to hear the lays of the songster. He appeared to be a stranger in those parts, and he pronounced Spanish as if he had been used to a less fluent language. His beard was grey, and of a great length; and from his venerable looks few would suppose him gifted with great vocal powers. Having poured out for him a brimming goblet, the revellers eagerly requested a song. Their desire was gratified, and the gleeman, having sipped the proffered beverage, proceeded, in an agreeable voice, to sing

the following lay, the music of which certainly had greater pretensions to merit than the words :

" In the minstrel's art I play my part—
A noble art it is, I ween;
To the crowned king doth the minstrel sing,
And often to the blooming queen.

From an ancient time did the gleeman's rhyme
Find favour in the warrior's ear;
And the martial train admired the strain
The wandering minstrel loved to rear.

But the gleeman still hath done much ill;
For music hath such potent sway,*
Pray, patient wait while I relate
What happened of the minstrel's lay.

In the chieftain's hall, at pleasure's call,
The Teutons joined in revelry;
And the laugh and song reigned in the throng,
For laughter-loving men were they.

But a harper grey chanced pass that way—
Full blithely did he touch the strings;
Soon at the board of the German lord,
At his request, the minstrel sings.

While love was his theme, it straight would seem,
That passion dwelt in every breast;
As the warrior crew in transports flew,
And each in words his thoughts expressed.

As he sang of wine a fire did shine,
Right joyous in each Teuton's eye;
And every brain seemed turned insane,
As if from inebriety.

When of war he sang, the chamber rang
With the shout that each one gave;
And a frenzied look each warrior took
Of those sons of Odin brave.

* " 'Tis good, though music oft hath such a charm
To make bad good and good provoke to harm."
Measure for Measure.

Then guest and lord drew forth his sword,
Possessed by demons fierce;
With brand and spear his comrade near
Did each one strike and pierce.

None who heard that lay saw more of day—
All formed a heap of slain;
And the ravens fed on the mighty dead
Who heard that minstrel's strain.

In the minstrel's art I play my part—
A simple, harmless part I play:
No blood need spill, nor aught of ill,
Arise from your poor gleeman's lay."

This performance gave great satisfaction, and many a broad piece of silver was presented to the musician, in token of approval. More wine was produced, and the minstrel, with greater ability than might be expected from his years, assisted in the distribution of it. While thus employed, he might be observed stealthily to cast a small portion of a dark-coloured powder into goblet of each.

"The devil," says the great Martin Luther, "likes not music." David's harp certainly exercised a mighty influence over the evil spirit which took possession of the mind of Saul; and music also served to call the Reformer to consciousness when, overcome by the intensity of mental suffering, his spirit for the moment departed. Still these brutal agents of a brutal tribunal lulled with rapture to the soft lay of the singer, and retained their ferocious nature. Orpheus' melody tamed wild beasts, but the harper's music quenched not the thirst for blood which man, even in the image of God, retained.

Another song was called for, and, in compliance with the request of his entertainers, the harper produced a plaintive strain on his instrument by way of prelude, and then, in a low, even monotonous manner, sang the following verses:

"I sing of a land of sunny skies—
Of flaxen hair, and of bright blue eyes,
Of rivers broad, and of forests deep,
And of open fields where browse the sheep;—

Whose sons are brave, and whose daughters fair—
For dangers none do the former care—
No houris can in beauty vie
With the lovely maids of Germany.

Though freedom may lurk in other lands,
And courage may dwell with other bands,
Yet none exist more brave and free
Than the far-famed sons of Germany.

From north to south have her children gone,
And there hath their wondrous prowess shown;
In distant lands we traces see
Of that mother of nations—Germany.

In Britain's isle have they made their home—
Through Gallia's coast did the fierce Franks roam;
For mighty by land, and great by sea,
Are the warrior tribes of Germany.

A land of honey and milk is she—
There corn and wine in plenty be;
From Rhine to Weser, from Elbe to Spree,
A bountiful soil hath Germany.

All hail the land of sunny skies—
Of flaxen hair and of bright blue eyes;
The home of the brave, the good and free,
For such is my much-loved Germany.

By the time these rhymes were concluded, many of the assembly, on whom the drug dissolved in the wine and the measured music of the gleeman had exercised a soothing effect, fell into a deep slumber, and few were sufficiently conscious to applaud or criticise the performance. A further draught of wine was poured out, and again conveyed to the several banqueters by the musician, who failed not to add a little of his mysterious mixture to the generous beverage. While producing a soft cadence on his harmonious instrument, the harper had the satisfaction of beholding one after another of the company fall back insensible, and the hardness of their breathing showed that they slept a sleep of more than usual soundness. Gradually diminishing the sound of his harp, the musician turned to the jailor, who carried at his

girdle the keys of the various cells, and, without awakening the sleeper, disengaged them. Having achieved his purpose, he extinguished the candles, placed the largess bestowed on him upon the glowing embers, and noiselessly glided from the room.

Staelburg meanwhile, on being conveyed from the scene of torture, was removed to a different prison from that in which he was previously confined. Here, nature being overcome by the prostration occasioned by infliction of torments, the unfortunate man enjoyed a brief oblivion of his troubles in rest, undisturbed by the sounds of merriment from the refectory. A slight motion of the lock of his cell awoke him, and, anticipating a further application of torture, he inquired whether the Inquisitors were come to torment him before his time. A gentle admonition of silence followed, and he became aware of the presence of an apparent stranger, who, approaching his pallet, breathed his name. Fearing that his disordered mind was presenting to him false images, the young Count rubbed his eyes with his swollen hands, to ascertain that he was fully awake. Yes, he could not be mistaken : he heard a well-remembered voice, and saw the form of one whom he had known in happier times, and he faintly answered, "Albert!"

It was indeed the faithful, fearless Albert, who, in the habit of a wandering minstrel, borrowing a hint from the well-known Blundell, had made a pilgrimage from Holland to Spain, to endeavour to effect the rescue of his friend. He had secretly, but prudently, tracked him, till his arrival at Valladolid. Long had he waited outside the gloomy building, in order to form his ideas of the situation of the secret prisons, and the probable scene of the incarceration of his countryman. From the information thus derived, and what little he could extract from the officials, Albert had determined to practise a bold artifice to obtain possession of the keys of the cells, and effect his liberation.

"Arise, and follow me," said Albert; "and you are once more free. The jailor is asleep, and the keys are in my possession."

"Noble Albert!" said the prisoner, "words fail to express my gratitude to you; but I cannot avail myself of your kindness. Is there no one else whom you may befriend?"

"Tush!" replied Albert; "your misfortunes have affected your brain; in calmer moments you will regret such romantic conduct. Remember, it is for life or death! If you do as I bid you, you are at liberty; remain, and a few days, perhaps, will see you bound to a stake as a condemned heretic. Do not trifle."

"Is it manful to shrink from danger, my friend? Would not my flight be construed as an admission of my guilt? I turn my back on no foe in an open field; neither will I show these Inquisitors that I fear them. They imprison me at their own will, and their own will may release me. Unless declared innocent, or sentenced to the stake as guilty, I quit not this place. It shall not be in their power to offer indignities to my effigy."

"These words are only worthy of a madman! Dress yourself without delay, for time is precious," said the brigand, in a tone of some annoyance.

"Be not angry with me, my generous Albert, if I persist in my determination. Imagine what a triumph my flight would be to the officials of the so-called Holy Office. For better or worse, I remain; nevertheless, there may be others who would have no such scruple."

In vain did Albert protest against his friend's mistaken views. The young Count was resolute; and, unable to shake his determination, Albert was on the point of leaving him, when he made one more appeal:

"What answer," said he, "shall I make to the lady Bertha? What will she think of the love you bear her, if you prefer dying a disgraceful death, to life for her sake? Think of her, and listen to common sense!"

A slight pause followed this energetic remonstrance, and the brigand began to flatter himself he had subdued the young Count's over-conscientious ideas; but Staelburg answered: "Bertha informed me, she would rather hear of my death than dishonour. I conceive it to be dishonourable in the extreme, to save life at the expense of character. Unless I can preserve both, I prefer remaining in captivity. Greet her courteously in my name; tell her that absence and distance endear her still

more to me, and that, with the hourly prospect of death before my eyes, I still think fondly of my betrothed. Assure her of the pleasure I should feel in again beholding her; but it cannot be thus. Give me her locket, and then farewell, my honest friend; we may not meet again!"

Albert complied with his request, wrung his hand without speaking, and, both vexed and sorry at his obstinacy, quitted the cell, leaving the door wide open.

Staelburg's present abode was, as we said before, in a totally different part of the building from his previous prison, and appeared to be less strongly constructed. How Albert contrived to find his way thither, and select the proper apartment, we know not; but we presume that sleight of hand, which he occasionally used for less justifiable purposes, forsook him not. After his departure, as the young Count pondered over the devotion displayed by the daring outlaw, he heard a sound in the adjoining cell. Although the general policy of the Inquisition was to prohibit any communication between the prisoners, the immaculate institution was not above taking advantage of any stray revelation which might be made, or terror inspired, by one captive to another. It no doubt suited their purpose to immure Staelburg in such a position that he might, if so inclined, hold some slight intercourse with the occupant of the adjoining place of confinement. This pious intention had been hitherto frustrated by the taciturnity of both, and at present the jailor seemed unable to profit by their edifying conversation. As Staelburg listened, he caught the sound of low, plaintive music, and heard a female voice, weak though sweet, sing, in the Dutch language, verses which may be rendered as follows:

"When bigotry in hideous form prevails—
 When might steps in where calmer reason fails,
 And with revolting rage true faith assails,—
 Peace hides its head.
 We see the good, the noble, and the brave,
 Doomed by mad zeal to an ignoble grave;
 Still superstition, with harsh voice, doth crave
 For blood to shed.

Mild pity doth its wonted haunts forsake,
 And hellish thoughts men's mind perverted make;
 The scaffold, rack, the gibbet, and the stake,
 For victims cry.
 Father of mercies, lend Thy grace to guide
 The wretched pris'ners that on Thee confide;
 In mercy spare us, but, should ill betide,
 Give strength to die.

Thou who hast said, 'Fear not, my little flock,
 The kingdom God will give you,' canst unlock
 The prison-doors—to Thee, our stedfast Rock,
 Thy children call.
 Lay bare Thine arm! awake, our God, awake!
 Show forth Thy power—let guilty tyrants quake;
 Let Thy dread voice, which made Mount Sinai shake,
 Direct us all.

God of all flesh, to Whom it does belong
 From utmost weakness to create us strong,
 Whose power protects the right, represses wrong,—
 Thine would I be.
 Shouldst Thou be pleased to break my present chains—
 Should cruelty inflict its torturing pains,—
 Grant me, O God, while aught of life remains,
 To honour Thee."

When the melody ceased, the imprisoned noble judged that the singer could be no other than his former nurse; and deeply did he regret that Albert had departed without effecting her release. Although the thinness of the partition would have suffered him to have addressed her, he forbore to speak. Before, however, he had fallen asleep, he was overjoyed to find that Albert had returned.

"The jailor is quiet enough," said he; "think no more of your mad regard for honour—look to yourself, and be once more free."

"I deeply regret you should have undertaken so hazardous an enterprise for my sake," said Staelburg; "but I cannot accompany you. Let me beg of you, though, to give liberty to the person confined in the next cell, to whom I am under great

obligations. I would fain speak to her, and will follow you to the precincts of the prison."

"Do let me urge you to take my advice," said he, as he quitted the room, and silently unlocked the door of the cell indicated.

"Sudden joys, like griefs, confound at first," says Robinson Crusoe,—on what authority we know not. Poor Alfrude, who had not the remotest idea of the nearness of the deliverance which her prayer besought, was overcome by the joy occasioned by the prospect of liberty. After an application of minor methods of torture, an infernal machine, called by the French *le chevallet*, preventing the sufferer from breathing, and endangering life, was employed to induce the girl to act as informer against Staelburg. The spirit was stronger than the flesh, and nothing could be extorted from her. She was now informed that her relaxation was decided upon, and that in a few days she would be summoned to an *auto-da-fê*, to die a cruel death in the presence of an inhuman, unsympathising mob. This statement was no doubt made with a view of inducing the luckless girl to confess; but it had an entirely contrary effect. Resolved that her departure out of the world should be sullied by no breach of faith, without any complaints of the hardness of her lot, she prepared for death.

Albert's proposal for her release was joyfully accepted, and she quitted the scene of her suffering, charged with kind messages from Staelburg to those who had befriended him in his exile. Long did she plead with him to be her companion homewards, and enjoy with her the sweets of liberty; but in vain. Staelburg followed them to the entrance-room; there he bid them a sad adieu. He then plucked off a small portion of the tapestry, and returned to his prison, rejoiced that his zealous physician had escaped the vengeance of her enemies.

His sleep was sound and refreshing, and he was only awoke by hearing his door, which had been left open, locked.

CHAPTER XXII.

Touching the effect produced on the Chiefs of the Holy Office by the Escape of Alfrude Naarveldt—the Fate of Michael the Spy—and the unexpected Acquittal of the Count of Staalburg.

GREAT was the rage of the Inquisitors in the morning, when they found themselves deprived of their victim. A vigorous pursuit of the fugitives was instituted; but Albert, who had pondered well over the means to be employed, found little difficulty in eluding the pursuers.

On the same day, Staalburg was again summoned into the presence of the Inquisitors, and was closely examined as to the events of the previous night. He duly informed them that an offer of liberation had been made to him, but that, relying on his innocence, he had declined to avail himself of it; and, in proof of his statement, produced the portion of tapestry he had torn from the entrance-hall. The Inquisitors gazed at each other in astonishment, as they heard that honour was a firmer bond on their captive than the bolts and bars on which they relied.

"You have acted prudently," said the Chief Inquisitor; "escape would have availed you nothing. The Holy Office possesses twenty thousand faithful servants, who would go through fire and water in the service of this sacred tribunal. You will see your wretched accomplice doomed to relaxation as a punishment for her presumption. Perhaps, on a full recantation of your errors, your fate may be more lenient. But to entitle you to compassion, you must reveal the name of this audacious intruder who has interfered between the suspected person and her judges."

Staalburg slightly smiled as he thought of a proverb advising no sale of a bear's skin to be made till the destruction of the animal is accomplished. In answer to the polite demand of the Inquisitor, he replied: "Excuse me, holy father. Whatever questions concern myself alone, I will freely answer; but I cannot act as spy to the conduct of others. It appears that vigilance was not practised; for this I am not responsible. It was not

dread of your familiars that induced me to remain in captivity, but an objection I had to any behaviour betokening fear of investigation."

"Have you still to learn prudence?" said the Inquisitor. "Has not the taste you have had of our power been sufficient to deter you from provoking our resentment? Did you reject an opportunity of escape with the view of defying the extirpators of heresy? Your insolent suggestions cannot be passed over with impunity."

"Be more temperate, and have more respect for justice," said the Count, with great composure. "In my German ideas of right and wrong, your words savour but little of that regard for equity which should actuate every true member of our beloved Mother Church."

"Take heed, or you will compel me to adopt measures I would fain avoid," said the Inquisitor, in an austere tone. "Praised be our Lady, we Spaniards display more zeal in the cause of religion than you apathetic Germans. Thanks to our care of the souls of those committed to our charge, no Luther has arisen to trample on the orthodox faith in Spain."

"Would, holy father, you could say, as was said of one who preached a far more tolerant religion: 'Of those whom thou gavest me, have I lost none.' I fear you propagate the true faith by severities, which the Founder of it never contemplated."

"Argue not with those better informed than yourself," responded the Inquisitor; "but answer my question, and feel grateful to me for my forbearance towards you."

"I have already informed you that I refused the offered release. I confess it was at my request that liberty was restored to one of the prisoners."

"Do you, then, take upon you the office of determining who are, and who are not, fit subjects for inquiry? You display a most marked disrespect for sacred things, young man! It is fitting we reduce you to a more humble spirit. A slight administration of the question might, perhaps, convince you that bravado is of no avail."

A flush of anger came over Staelburg's countenance as he

heard the accomplished casuist resort to this contemptible style of argument; and he boldly answered: "To quote the words of a learned but persecuted heathen philosopher, 'Pound the bag of Anaxarchus,—himself thou canst not pound.' *Mors ultima linea rerum*. The frail link which binds me to earth, torture will soon snap; and then not all the endeavours of cruelty can arrest the flight of my disembodied spirit, I trust, to glory. I decline to gratify your curiosity, holy father."

The Inquisitor, chafed by this fearless speech, was only prevented from amply fulfilling his threat by the entrance of one of the familiars, who placed in his hand a packet. As he perused the papers, the Inquisitor assumed an appearance of much anxiety and doubt; and his assistants, to whom he passed them, seemed to share his feelings. Then turning to the person who supplied the place of jailor—the last one having been deprived of his office, and subjected to severe penances, for his want of attention to his duties—he commanded him to take the accused to his prison, and see that he wanted nothing.

With a gloomy foreboding of ill, the Count again entered his cell; his unexpected reprieve from torture failed to awaken within him any greater hope of deliverance; and nothing but his chivalrous disposition prevented his feeling intense regret at his rejection of an opportunity of escape.

Sounds of agony, in the opposite direction to that lately tenanted by Alfrude Naarveldt, reminded him that there were others in captivity still more wretched than himself. At first he could but think that his confinement near a dying person must have been an artifice of the Inquisitors, to inspire him with terror and bring him to submission. At length he concluded that the sufferer was, most probably, the wretched Michael, removed thither after the catastrophe which had taken place. His keeper soon after made his appearance, bearing a dinner, on a scale far superior to the ordinary diet allowed to the prisoners, and to him Staelburg applied for information touching the man. The jailor answered that he knew not what had become of him; that his duties consisted only in taking charge of certain cells, of which the one in question formed no part;

and that he doubted not that the dignitaries of the establishment would amply attend to Michael's wants. Without troubling himself to go further into the subject, the jailor withdrew; but the fearful shrieks of the injured executioner still haunted the ears of the young Count. After a brief intermission, the groans were repeated, and continued without abatement for some time. So violent and incessant were they, that they prevented Staelburg from taking any rest. Towards morning they became fainter and fainter, and it appeared that the sufferer's frame was growing gradually weaker. The partition on that side was thicker than on the other; and all his attempts at holding conversation with the mangled tormentor were fruitless. The following day, on the entrance of the jailor, our hero again drew his attention to the wants of the wounded man, and earnestly implored him, as he in his turn would hope for mercy, to go to his assistance. The man drily answered, that his predecessor had got into difficulty for failing in his duty, and that it might be his lot to be dismissed for exceeding his instructions.

After the failure of his endeavours to prevail upon the jailor to attend to his helpless enemy, Staelburg attempted to give his attention to a volume furnished him, but without success; for the sounds of agony were repeated with such intensity as almost to distract him. Mixed with these, he could hear the most fearful imprecations on those who, having availed themselves of the services of the unhappy man, had now left him to perish miserably. It was an awful thing to hear the ravings of the dying Michael; and each yell served as a "memento mori" to Staelburg.

At length a cry—if possible, fiercer than ever—rang through the prison, and then a deep stillness reigned. Without any one to soothe his expiring moments, to administer consolation to his soul, or relieve his troubled body—deserted by those whom he had faithfully served—his conscience reproaching him for many and aggravated misdeeds,—Michael's spirit departed. What induced the Inquisitors to pay so little heed to his necessities, we know not, unless it was that the annoyance occasioned by the escape of Alfrude Naarveldt had diverted their thoughts

from them, or that the miserable Michael had, by his carelessness, roused their fearful wrath.

Touched by the tragic end of his treacherous foe, Staelburg dropped a tear of commiseration, and offered up a fervent prayer for the salvation of his soul. Scarcely had he risen from his knees, ere he received an announcement to attend the Inquisitors again. Anticipating torture of the most refined nature, but hoping that this would be the last occasion when he would be ignorant of his doom, he obeyed the summons.

On reaching the audience-chamber, he was agreeably surprised to behold an expression of greater benignity play upon the rigid features of the Chief Inquisitor. Every courtesy was shown him; and he began to entertain a greater dread of the deceptive blandness of the wily judges than he did of their former severity.

The Inquisitor addressed him in a short speech, extolling, as was his wont, the clemency of the Holy Office, and the delight it ever afforded her to be the means of effecting a reconciliation between the injured Church and those persons who in a contrite manner acknowledged their errors. As this was generally the introduction to violence and cruelty, an inward dread seized Staelburg. He listened, however, in quietness; and was greatly astonished to hear the superior, in the close of his address, treat of the respect formed by himself and associates for the high principle which had actuated him since his incarceration. He proceeded to say, that of all monarchs who had come to the brightness of the rising of true religion, none could exceed the well-beloved Maximilian of Germany in devotion and sincerity. He observed, that this undoubtedly religious monarch had requested that all mercy consistent with the good pleasure of the king, or other the authority in whose custody the prisoner then was, should be shown him as a true man, a brave soldier, and a zealous professor of the Catholic faith; and further, that the gallant Don Pedro de Valencia had intimated that his life was entirely owing to Staelburg's intercession. As these estimable men had expressed themselves satisfied that heresy found no favour with the prisoner, the Holy Office was unwilling to

believe them mistaken; and that, on a mature comparison of the bearings of his case, the Inquisitors declared that the charges brought against him had not been substantiated, and he was consequently entitled to his discharge. In order to manifest the good-will they bore him, and to bring the prosecution to a speedy termination, all unnecessary forms of procedure had been dispensed with, and he was at perfect liberty to take his departure when convenient to himself. The better to carry out the wishes of all parties interested, the king, he was informed, had no objection to his release, on being assured of his future neutrality in the contest between himself and subjects. This assurance Staelburg thought it not dishonourable to give.

The jailor was then called upon to account for the moneys and effects found in the possession of the prisoner at the time of his delivery to the Holy Office. After the deduction of the expenses of his living—which, it must be confessed, were on a moderate scale—the contents of his purse at the period of his capture were handed to him. A few questions were put as to the conduct of the keeper towards him, and a written promise obtained that his revelations should be kept secret. The chief of the Inquisitors afterwards made him a polite bow, and his obsequious assistants followed his example; and, to his inexpressible delight, Staelburg found himself free.

Before quitting the gloomy prison, the jailor delivered to him two letters, of which the seals were intact; one of which, he informed him, had been forwarded, with other papers, from the palace at Madrid. To add to his exultation, he found the letter indicated contained the imperial revocation of the decree of banishment passed on him by the Margrave of Baden, and a summons to return to his native country so soon as his convenience would permit. He had no doubt of the person to whom he was indebted for his release; and his feelings of gratitude, both to the Supreme Director of events and the warm-hearted Godfrey were hearty. The second epistle was from his friend Don Pedro, who seemed to be aware of his probable liberation, and breathed an affectionate sympathy with his sufferings. It stated that its writer first became acquainted with his incarceration-

tion by the Donna Maria, who resided at Valladolid, and whose wedding with him was to take place on the following day. According to his promise, he bade our hero cordially welcome to the nuptial festivities. The abode of the young lady was accurately described, and Staelburg thought that politeness demanded his attendance.

After quitting the sombre stronghold of the Inquisition, Staelburg discovered a comfortable *hostelrie* at no very great distance from his previous quarters, where abundant attention was promised to the wants of the inner man by M. de Quarville, the host, a flippant, chattering Frenchman, who exhibited a likeness, certainly not very flattering, of Philip the Second, as the tutelar deity of his establishment. A little mulled Canary was demanded, and disposed of in becoming style by Boniface and his customer. As mine host's heart began to open with the good liquor he was imbibing, he favoured his auditor with his views on the state of things in general, and particularly informed him of two heretics, of great obstinacy, awaiting condemnation at the hands of the Holy Office,—one of whom, it was reported, the prince of darkness had personally carried away. He then crossed himself, and stated that the other still remained, and he understood that his relaxation was certain. Staelburg smiled as he enlightened him as to the identity of himself with the unfortunate person of whom he spake. It was most ludicrous to behold the ease with which the talkative little Frenchman adapted himself to circumstances; and the abuse which he heaped on the holy fathers as the authors of ill to his guest (having first assured himself of the absence of any spy) was in no very measured degree. As another flagon was being prepared, no less a personage than Don Pedro made his appearance. So actively did he lecture the Boniface on the necessity of his procuring none but viands of the best quality at his wedding-feast—at which, it appeared, De Quarville was retained as caterer—that he did not heed the fact of there being another person in the room. When he had finished his comments on the number and substance of the courses to be served up (M. de Quarville bowing with wondrous grace at every word uttered), he turned

himself towards Staelburg; and as he caught sight of his face, he embraced him fervently.

"Fortune," said he, "I know not whether to call it good or bad, has brought you to Valladolid in time to be a spectator of my marriage; and I trust nothing now impedes your road to happiness."

"I thank you for your good wishes, my friend," said the Count. "I rejoice at your happiness, and have the pleasure of informing you, I see now every prospect of the attainment of my own."

"I shall consider you the star of our party," said the young Spaniard. "But how came you to prevail upon the Inquisitors to liberate you? I fear my sorry testimonial could avail you but little. You look wretchedly ill and thin. The privations suffered at Leyden, and the meagre diet of the Holy Office, have altered you sadly since I met you in open field, my generous foe."

Staelburg was too polite to state his suspicions that the Emperor of Germany was the chief instrument in setting him at large, and he therefore replied: "Thanks to your generous intercession, I am once more free; and, I trust, the perils through which I have been so wonderfully preserved will make me in future appreciate the blessings of liberty."

"And my captivity made me appreciate the virtues of my captor," said Don Pedro. "Gladly would I submit to an imprisonment of far greater duration and rigour to obtain one such friend as yourself. Adversity is, in our case, at once the parent and the test of friendship."

Notwithstanding Staelburg's plea of his inability to take strong liquors, in consequence of the weakness of his frame and the temperate regimen he had lately observed, nothing would satisfy the open-hearted Don Pedro but a further stoup of wine to drink to their future happiness.

In the pleasure of the meeting, Staelburg forgot all the misfortunes which had befallen him since he was last in the company of his friend, and the toast proposed was gladly responded to. When the bottom of the bowl was laid bare, chiefly through the

onslaught of Spanish chivalry, our hero accompanied the young Don as far as the abode of the fair Donna Maria, where he took leave of him, deferring for the present his introduction, and returned to the "Bueno Rey Felipo," where he found the sign creaking, and mine host discoursing in exactly the same manner as when he left them. As his attire was not quite in accordance with the evening costume of the age, he applied to M. de Quarville to inform him of the best emporium at which to replenish his wardrobe: the host, proud of his taste in attire, took him to the shop of a tailor, a crony of his, and, moreover, a personage possessing a tongue constructed upon principles similar to his own, where he gave full instructions for the manufacture of a vestment suited to the occasion. Staelburg, whose garb was in general very simple, was surprised at the profusion of lace and embroidery produced by the snip as the decoration of his toga; but as his imperfect knowledge of Spanish did not permit him to interfere, the fluent little Frenchman had all after his own ideas, and he eloquently urged upon his ally the necessity of the article being prepared with the utmost despatch.

Shortly after the young noble's return to the hostelry, the expeditious tradesman prepared a *pierpoint* of a bright green, trimmed and slashed, with all the minor adornments of the fashion; and although M. de Quarville bestowed high encomiums on both garment and wearer, Staelburg could not refrain from thinking his appearance ridiculous. Nevertheless, he was compelled to be guided by the opinion of his new acquaintance; and a considerable number of Dutch guilders rewarded the tailor for his trouble.

Sweetly did Staelburg sleep that night; no dread of being conducted to torment broke in upon his slumbers. He thought of her whose image had been present to his memory in more troublous times, and in his dreams he still saw her lead him through many difficulties to tranquillity. In his delight at finding the sentence of banishment annulled, he thought not of the opposition he must expect from Würmer. To Staelburg all was *couleur de rose*; once more with those he loved, all difficulties seemed small indeed. As to his contemplated father-in-law, although Hardfels had hinted to him the reasons which dictated

the harsh measure he practised, Staelburg had yet to value the prudence and kindness which actuated him.

The morning was such as any lover would choose to witness his union with the object of his affections. The sun shone; the birds twittered in the distance, notwithstanding the winter, in proper Arcadian style. M. de Quarville was in good spirits at the chances there were of his obtaining a rich emolument from catering to the wants of the wedding guests; and as he himself prepared Staelburg's breakfast, he did not fail to compliment him on the change which a good night's rest had wrought in his appearance. Soon after his morning repast had been completed, the rumbling of carriages, and the merry sound of bells, informed Staelburg that the ceremony was about to be performed. He did not, however, form one of the party, as, from a previous arrangement with the bridegroom, his attendance was excused.

At the time appointed by Don Pedro, Staelburg did not fail to present himself at the scene of festivity, clad in his new vestment, his beard and moustache carefully trimmed, and his whole attire most accurately adjusted. Don Pedro, whose eye detected him among the numerous guests, forthwith introduced him to the bride, who certainly did credit to his taste. She warmly thanked him for the interest he had taken in her over-rash husband, and expressed the gratification his company afforded her. The flattered Staelburg acknowledged his sense of the compliment in a string of polite expressions, carefully selected by the officious M. de Quarville.

Dancing was soon commenced, and although our hero's heart was too full of silent thankfulness for the mercies shewn him to indulge in much merriment, he could not forbear from mingling in the joyous throng. The bride herself became his partner, and, to the enlivening music of the guitar, he footed a galliard with as much animation as the rest. Fandangos and other fashionable dances followed each other in rapid succession, until Staelburg, unable to carry on the amusement for so long a time as his companions, in a quiet nook watched the graceful figures of the stately Donnas, as they wended the mazes of the intricate dances of the period. Nor was this his sole pastime: he found no want of conversation in such Spanish as he could frame.

In the intervals between the dances, his entertainer brought him under the notice of the high-born grandees, and he saw enough to convince him that some Spaniards were different from those whose rapacities had excited the indignation of the men of the Low Countries.

We will not dilate on the proud, flashing eyes of the daughters of Spain; the brilliants which sparkled on their necks; or the delicate ankles displayed in the dances; neither will we exhaust the reader's patience, and make his mouth water, by too minute an account of the boneless animals,—peacocks and other birds in full plumage, *olla podridis*,—and other delicacies with which the host of the “Philip the Second” had covered the table. Staelburg almost fancied he beheld the realisation of the Oriental legends with which Kaisa used to amuse him in his younger days. The handsome gold candelabra, and costly goblets containing wine of the most exquisite flavour, excited his admiration; and the urbane manner of the master of the feast, and the parents of the bride, gave him a very favourable idea of Spanish hospitality. Perhaps it was the fact of his being a stranger, taken in the service of the enemy, and saved almost by a miracle from the vengeance of the spiritual arm, that excited the sympathy of the generous Donnas; but, at any rate, the modest Count was almost overpowered by the homage paid him. The amusements of the evening having been resumed for a short time, and the farewell cup circulated, the party separated, and Staelburg took a fond adieu of his illustrious friends.

After enjoying comfortable repose at M. de Quarville's excellent establishment, our hero consulted his host as to the best route to be taken to Germany. Since it was his intention to repair to Vienna in the first instance, and present his respectful thanks to his imperial master for the favour shown him, M. de Quarville thought he could not do better than travel to Barcelona, and take shipping thence to Genoa. To accomplish an overland route, the French border must be crossed; and, from the variance existing between rival parties in that country, the rights of neutrality might not be strictly respected.

Being as impatient to return to his native country as he had

been precipitate in leaving it, the young Count was not very fastidious in the selection of a steed to bear him to Barcelona. Having obtained a sorry parody on an Andalusian charger, and paid all expenses incurred at Valladolid, with a light heart and lighter purse, he started on his journey. His mind, however, travelled faster than his body, which the laziness of his horse materially retarded. Although the prospect of a return to those he loved might have made him regardless of other things, his reflective disposition had ample subject for thought in the beautiful scenery, and marks of ancient magnificence, which almost every step disclosed. The fertile valleys, over which huge oxen were drawing heavy ploughs in preparation for harvest, spoke of the future; the ruins of some grim fortress commanding the adjacent country recalled the past to his memory; while many an elegant chateau, round which beautiful rivulets meandered, reminded him of the present.

No brigand clad in the romantic garb which from father to son has distinguished the calling, levied black mail on the traveller; had they attempted to deprive him of his substance,—as the proverb informs us, it is a work of some difficulty to extract blood from a flint,—it is probable that the remuneration of the assailants would have been so small that “*le jeu ne voudrait pas la chandelle.*” What a security is poverty! While the rich suffer the cares of affluence, and the dread that the chance which gave them wealth may deprive them of it, like Horace’s “*Luculli miles dum noctu stertit,*” the wayfarer, shoeless and penniless, enjoys an immunity from molestation—nay, is not unfrequently the recipient of the bounty of the worshippers of the god Terminus. Judging, doubtless, the resources of the man by the merits of the steed, as the majority of the world do by the texture of his coat (we need scarcely state that on this occasion Staelburg did not deck himself in his new doublet), the freebooters, if any such there were, suffered him to pass without interruption.

The host of the “Philip the Second” had kindly supplied the traveller with an account of the best places of accommodation on his road, and for a sum of money quite in accordance with his wealth, both cavalier and Rosinante were well looked after.

Few persons did he meet on the way; occasionally a solitary peasant, whose noble features spoke of high lineage and better days, greeted him with the manly salute of the country; but, with this exception, little served to recal his thoughts from their wanderings.

At length his road lay by the hallowed Mount of Montserrat, where a few pilgrims, some with and more without peas in their shoes, wended their way along the rugged road leading towards the sacred shrine. It was at the close of the day when Staelburg approached the holy mountain, with the intention of requesting lodging for the night, and the bright rays of the setting sun shed a beautiful glow over the picturesque scenery. All spoke of peace: the chivalrous Moors had long left their mountain fastnesses; houses of religion stood in the neighbourhood of buildings erected for warlike purposes; the chant of the cloistered monk supplied the place of the fierce war-shout of earlier times; and the earth was trodden by the bare feet of the humble devotee, which had formerly resounded with the tramp of well-armed warriors. As he was forming comparisons between past events and present occurrences, his steed, possessed probably of no such sentimental turn, picked a stone in his foot, and, being rather

“Like Cæsar’s horse, who, as fame goes,
Had corns upon his feet and toes,”

fell with great violence when within a short distance from the monastery. Staelburg was thrown on his head, and left senseless with the force of the shock, which, nevertheless, was considerably broken by his stout hat. On recovering possession of his senses, he found a monk busily engaged in bathing his temples, and his unfortunate horse standing near him. Although the good brother urged him to accept the services of the lay members of the establishment, and be carried to the convent, Staelburg declined his kind offer, and succeeded, by his assistance, in walking up the steep road to the monastery. As this was about the time for the supper of the monks, preparation was speedily made for the reception of the traveller. Brother Christopher, as his kind guide was called, procured the best of everything for him; and no entreaties on the part of the young Count could prevail upon

the self-denying brethren to think of themselves until his own wants had been amply attended to.

If there is one thing more than another which tends to act as a set-off against the cruelty which is but too frequently practised by the Romish Church, and convince an unbiassed person that all within her walls is not so corrupt as many would have us suppose, that thing must be the never-failing hospitality and benevolence of the fraternities of monks, whose doors are ever open to the needy traveller, and on whom the cry of distress is never lost. Whatever virtues Protestants of the present day may lay claim to, it is to be feared that works of charity are not practised with so much zeal and fervour as in the times of our Romish ancestors, when, from the liberality of the religious houses, no necessity was found for imposing poor-rates to support the indigent. It may be urged, with justice, that the same number of persons individually might effect the same amount of good as the united brotherhood; but, alas! there is ground for apprehension that the will is wanting, without which the way is but of little use. Again, it may be said, that the money bestowed upon the poor is, by a system of extortion, derived from the rich; but that charity, "which hopeth all things, believeth all things," would prompt us to hope and believe that there were many who practised benevolence entirely for its own sake, at a noble sacrifice of self. To think otherwise would be to form an opinion very degrading to human nature.

The repast being finished, Brother Christopher led the way to a dormitory, where a bed, covered with a snow-white counterpane, seemed to court repose. The good-natured monk had selected a place where the sound of the matin's bell might not disturb his rest. Surely Staelburg thought his lot had been one of greater mercy than he had any right to expect. When he saw no prospect but that of perpetual imprisonment or a cruel death, he beheld roses spring up in the wilderness, and happiness seemed to smile upon him with additional brightness. The blow on his forehead, occasioned by his fall, served, however, as a slight thorn in the flesh to control his extatic feelings, and gradually occasioned him much pain; so that it was not until morning that

he tasted sleep, and then it was of anything but a sound nature. His constitution, shaken by famine, pestilence, and mental and bodily torture, was unable to sustain much; and the concussion, which to a man in good health would have been but little, produced in him an alarming attack of illness. Delirium set in, and for some time the patient's life was in great danger. The attentive monks applied leeches to his brow, and did all that was in their power to restore him to health; but for some time their kindness availed little to check the progress of disease. Ultimately, Staelburg opened his eyes, and, although feverish and languid, was perfectly sensible. He gazed quietly round the little apartment; near the window was seated one of the order, deeply engaged in the study of a book. As if unable to repress the musings of his mind, the brother mechanically exclaimed, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." As he turned himself to the bed, he found the patient with his eyes fixed firmly on him, and his wan, sallow countenance became crimson with a blush, as he thought of the exposure he had made. Laying aside the book he had been reading, he brought a little jelly to the invalid, on whom it produced a beneficial result, and enabled him to make some inquiries as to the length of time he had remained in his present position. The monk, who bore the name of Fray Diego, informed him that for some few days his life had been in great danger, but added, now that the coma which attended delirium had subsided, there was a probability that quietness and rest would work his recovery. A placid slumber then took possession of Staelburg, and he slept without intermission for many hours. Seeing the happy change in his charge, Fray Diego resumed the study of his book. The perusal of the volume seemed to affect him much, and, by the sighs emitted and tears shed, it seemed that the lesson he derived therefrom was a painful one. Observing a slight motion on the part of the invalid, he quitted his position, and went to inform Brother Christopher of the improvement exhibited. The good monk desired him to return to his duties, and report any further change, while he himself went to prepare such light nourishment as might be necessary.

As Fray Diego entered the apartment, he found that all fever had left Staelburg, who was by this time awake, and that the only thing to be dreaded was the exhaustion of the system consequent upon the delirium. The sick man endeavoured to induce his watchful attendant to receive his confession and administer absolution to him, as he was of opinion that the rally was only chronic, and that he could not bear up against any repetition of the attack; but Fray Diego held a different view, and declined to go into the subject, lest the excitement should be too much for him.

After refreshing himself with the delicacies which the benevolent Brother Christopher had prepared, Staelburg felt still more himself; and the latter ecclesiastic, who was well-versed in medicine, pronounced the worst to be past, and that there was ground for hoping that, by adopting a nourishing diet and abstaining from the slightest excitement, he might ere long be restored to health. When he was again left alone with his original attendant, Staelburg urged upon him the necessity there was of his religious duties being performed. As Fray Diego became aware of the increase of strength obtained by his patient,—fearing lest a refusal of his request should be more productive of evil than a compliance,—he timidly suffered him to proceed. In a faithful manner, the invalid began to enumerate the faults and failings committed since his last confession; and when he had described all he could call to mind, he begged for absolution.

The monk hesitated for some time, and seemed very averse to the concession of his wishes. Imagining Fray Diego's silence proceeded from the magnitude of his offences, Staelburg demanded what penance he thought proper to impose.

Fray Diego shook his head in sadness, as he answered: "I thought not of penance. Can the infliction of bodily mortification wash away sin? Would that such were the case! My objections were, lest the guilt of the administrator should render the given absolution of no effect. But as the office is unaffected by the offences committed by the holder, I will not deprive you of the comfort which the assurance of salvation on repentance, given by so unworthy a being as myself, can impart to you."

He then proceeded to repeat the form of absolution, which being done, he hid his face in his robe and wept aloud. As he became calmer, he said, in a tone of suppressed emotion: "You have made a confession which for particularity can be seldom surpassed. The majority of the confessions I have taken, I fear, have been of that character that the most heinous sins have been suppressed, and only the superficial failings disclosed; but He who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins knows better than His fallible ministers the sincerity of the repentance, and the depth of the contrition, of those who appear to confess. I cannot speak of the infliction of penances; for are we not informed that a surrender of the fruit of the body is wholly inadequate to expiate the sin of the soul? "Burnt-offerings and sacrifices thou wouldest not; then said I, Lo, I come," are the words of the Psalmist. Man must seek other means of grace than those furnished by his own humiliation, or the intercession of justified believers. St. James tells us to confess our faults one to another. None are exempt from this ordinance. The humble layman and the titled ecclesiastic are equally within its meaning. Listen to me, therefore, and judge whether I have not cause to regret the inability of stripes and abstinence to atone for sin. But no; you are not in a fit position to hear of the heavy crimes which, as it were, tear my heart. When you have sufficiently recovered your strength, then will I disclose all."

Glad of an opportunity of avoiding so unpleasant a revelation, and desirous of comforting the unhappy Diego, the Count mildly suggested that, even assuming his views to be correct, contrition, such as that he manifested, would be ground for hope that his case was not altogether desperate. As if pained with the slightest allusion to the subject, Brother Diego retired to the opposite side of the room, where, with his face averted, he seemed in deep communion with his own heart. The remembrance of the appearance of his cheeks—sometimes of a deadly pallor, sometimes reddened with a hectic flush,—his livid lips, and the anxious, careworn look his countenance at all times bore,—convinced Staelburg that reflection, the stethoscope of the mind, had produced an awful, yet perhaps salutary, effect on the conscience.

stricken monk, who, he feared, had but a short time to live. Nothing further was said on the matter during that day; but Fray Diego lost no opportunity of showing that, much as remorse had enfeebled his body, his mind was free from any misanthropical tendency.

On the following day, when he considered his patient in a better state to attend to him, Fray Diego drew his chair nearer to the bedside, and commenced his promised confession, which forms the next chapter of our tale.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In which the Monk relates the Sins of which his Conscience accused him, and which are found to relate materially to the development of our Tale.

"To give you a clearer insight into the horrible narrative I am about to make," said Diego, in a husky voice, which gradually cleared as he went on, "I will inform you of the manner in which my early days were spent. I was born in Cordova, where my parents carried on a lucrative business. In early youth I formed an acquaintance with a young man, some years my senior, named Saavedra, from whom I received much instruction, far more, indeed, than from the sage preceptors employed by my father; but, alas! his lessons were of no real utility to me. He wrote an admirable hand, and so much pains did he take to perfect me in this branch of my education, that I could soon form characters with as much fluency and elegance as himself. He was frequently in the habit of producing the handwritings of different persons, in order to test, as I thought, my imitative powers. I displayed no lack of ability, and, by repeated application to the task, I succeeded in counterfeiting signatures with such dexterity as to elicit his warm admiration. I soon obtained a glimmering of his motive in bestowing such pains upon me: obligations for sums of money were repeatedly brought with the autograph of the required persons, which I would forge so nicely as to defy detection. The money obtained by my ingenious fraud went to

enrich him ; but I must do him the credit of admitting that all recompense promised me was faithfully handed over. Proud of the praise called forth by my skill, and, I regret to say, in the hope of increasing my finances, I was accustomed to prepare several forms ready for use, in imitation of various autographs, not being the signatures of the intended parties, which no doubt, whether payable to himself or others, produced an immense income to the unprincipled Saavedra. Soon after I had adopted this pernicious course, my neat and respectable appearance, preserved at the expense of integrity, obtained for me the position of secretary to the abbot of the convent at Cordova. Even then I detested the hypocrisy I practised ; for, much as my behaviour was to be reprobated, my disposition was not naturally bad. Great were the encomiums bestowed upon my attention to the duties of my office, and the good churchman offered to direct my studies so as to enable me, if so inclined, to enter the Church, where, he doubted not, my engaging manners and great talents would procure for me rapid promotion. But I shuddered at the thought of practising such simony as to cause myself to be admitted to holy orders with such a weight of depravity upon me. It might not then have been too late to return to rectitude. It would have been impossible for me to mention all the parties whom I have defrauded, since many instruments being prepared in blank, I know not the names which Saavedra inserted. A confession of my guilt would have invoked the vengeance of the numerous supporters of my preceptor ; but had I obeyed the dictates of conscience, I should have chosen a death, even attended with torments, in preference to the mental agony afterwards reserved for me. I had, however, tasted of the pleasures of sin, and the taste made me long for more. Unfortunately, I added the art of poisoning to my dangerous knowledge ; and so well did I study the science that the most deadly drugs were handled by me with impunity. At length, my worthy patron died—I protest, not by my hand,—and a considerable sum of money was left me. With this I might have lived in affluence, and poverty need never have tempted me to resort to crime ; but ‘quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat,’ and nothing less than madness could have urged

me on. Saavedra had some time before quitted Cordova, and soon after led that life of bold enterprising fraud which, though for a time successful, condemned him to a long servitude to the galleys, and rendered him an object of far greater notoriety than the incendiary of the Ephesian temple. After his departure, I adopted a course of great outward probity, and passed amongst my neighbours for a well-principled young man. My father dying, I succeeded to the whole of his property, with the exception of my mother's dower. To banish reflection and indulge a mania for novelty, I resolved on visiting foreign countries, with which view I packed up what few things I needed, including my drugs and instruments, and made a tour of the principal countries of Europe. For a time this pleased me well, and I gave not a thought to the wickedness of my past life. Mixing with companions of dissolute habits, I threw aside every show of morality, and stained my hands with various kinds of crimes. One friend, however, having tracked me out, expostulated with me on the sins I was committing. He knew not all, or he would have given me up as reprobate. I repeatedly warned him not to interfere; but his fondness for me, and the promise he had made my poor mother to watch over me with a parent's care, induced him to disregard my warnings. After a late debauch, I returned to my lodgings, and have a faint idea of mixing up some subtle poison; what I did with it I cannot remember; but, oh! could it be that my faithful friend met his death by my ungrateful hand!"

Here the unhappy Diego paused, overcome by the weight of his emotions, while big drops stood on his ghastly countenance. By the force of self-compulsion, he succeeded in conquering his feelings, and then resumed his confession:

"These will give you a faint idea of the crimes I committed; to particularise each would be more than the short time I feel I have on earth, or the strength of both of us, will permit. I must nevertheless inform you that, both in France and Italy, the secret poisons I vended found ready sale, and, I fear, were frequently employed to accomplish the destruction of persons exciting the jealousy or displeasure of my patrons. Fearing de-

tection, as the officers of justice were keeping me in view, I quitted the latter country, and for some time took up my residence in Germany, where I became the ruling spirit of a desperate gang of men, some of high birth, whose acquaintance I formed at Mentz."

Here Staelburg listened with great attention, in order to ascertain who the parties were with whom the penitent Diego formerly associated.

"I, however," continued the monk, "concealed my surpassing knowledge of the use of herbs and minerals, not from any aversion to show my skill, but from remembrance of the danger which resulted from it in other countries. One of my most intimate friends (if friendship can be said to exist between the depraved) was a young man of a noble family in that part of the country named Winfrick."

"Würmer, perhaps," suggested Staelburg.

The countenance of the unfortunate Diego, became, if possible, paler than ever, as he added: "What! do you, then, know that monster of iniquity?—not so black as my own, though, I am shocked to say!"

"Yes, unfortunately," said Staelburg; "but there was never much affection between us."

"To continue: either to banish thought, or to indulge my vicious habits, I employed much time in gambling; and as, I am ashamed to confess, I used coggled dice, I frequently won large sums. Although there was, in appearance, great confidence existing between this Würmer and myself, in reality each regarded the other with suspicion. His manner was too cold and reserved for me, a Spaniard, with all the suspicion and fire of my race,—forger, murderer, gambler, and swindler, though I was.

"On one unlucky night, after playing at a private establishment at some little distance from the town (chiefly supported by myself and companions), with other and less-experienced persons, of whom I gained but slightly,—as was my custom with beginners,—he challenged me to a private trial of skill. Much as I wished to lay aside the deception I was practising, I observed his eye, fixed like a tiger's, on every movement I made. I was

accordingly necessitated to trust all to a bold stratagem; to decline his proposal was out of the question. I therefore, with a light jest, threw the dice. Immediately after I had made my cast, Würmer seized the die, made a minute examination of it, and so detected the cheat. Thus discovered in an open fraud, for the first time in my life, I was thoroughly cowed and ashamed; and bitterly did I regret I had not discontinued my wicked practices. I expected nothing less than an ignominious expulsion from his society, perhaps to be delivered over to the hands of the officers of the law as a common swindler. While I stood and trembled (for my wretchedness, although nothing to what I have since endured on account of my vicious practices, exceeded aught I had before experienced), Würmer answered, in a familiar manner: 'So you thought to get over me with clogged dice, my friend; in future let me recommend you to fly your falcon at less wary game. Defraud younger and less-experienced men, as you will; but beware lest you attempt to deceive a person of too suspicious a nature to be easily defrauded.'

"As I was about to make a most abject apology—for, in the humiliation of the exposure, all sense of dignity had left me—he interrupted me by saying: 'Nay, my good friend, make no excuses—I reproach you not; we all add to our incomes according to our own views. You merely sought to extract money from me, but were unsuccessful, as hundreds of others have been under similar circumstances. I do not blame—I pity—nay, more,—I respect you; to make so bold an attempt was praiseworthy, and spoke of a vigorous, energetic mind; to suffer yourself to be found out was certainly indiscreet. You will acknowledge that I have every right to inform my friends of the manner in which you win their money, and no doubt their narrow-minded bigotry would pronounce you guilty of swindling, and deal with you accordingly; but to my more liberal views, so far from meriting reproach, your conduct not only calls for great commendation, but also reward. Keep what your talents have obtained for you; may it promote your happiness. I do not say my secrecy is altogether gratuitous. I do not censure you for making the most of your opportunity; pardon me if I do what I

can with mine. Be with me to-morrow evening at nine o'clock in this very room, and you may render me an important service.'

"Feeling a temporary joy at finding my conduct concealed from the giddy youths I had so shamefully defrauded, I was on the point of pouring forth a torrent of thanks; but Würmer stopped me in the same matter-of-fact way, adding, that I owed him nothing, the contract between us being for our mutual benefit. So saying, he drew my arm in his, and led me to join the rest of the company, before whom he loudly praised the gentlemanly self-command I had shown in the game. Throughout the evening he behaved to me in the most pointedly polite manner. so that I began to experience, in some measure, the sad consolation, known only to the wicked, that the only evidence against me was, in all probability, stifled,—forgetting that there was One Eye everywhere present, who witnessed all that I had done throughout my career of vice. As we broke up for the night, Würmer shook me cordially by the hand, assured me of his eternal friendship, and bade me not forget the appointment he had made.

"I retired to my bed that night, not to sleep. I felt considerably annoyed at having placed myself so completely in his power, while his cool self-possession and apparent sympathy with me galled me to the quick. I discovered that in Würmer I beheld a being gifted with talents superior to the generality of my acquaintance, and I both hated and feared him. This was the first time my nefarious conduct had produced serious inconvenience to me; and notwithstanding all his assurances of secrecy, I felt a vague but powerful dissatisfaction with myself, and the crimes which had made me such as I then was. The sharp stings of conscience pricked me: accustomed to act from no higher principle than self-gratification, vainly trying to believe that man's race is run at the termination of his career in the flesh, now that the former failed, and pleasure, such as it was, could not be derived from a continuation of life,—I produced a phial of destructive mixture, and was on the point of raising it to my lips, when, by some unaccountable impulse, it slipped from my hand and was

dashed to pieces on the floor. Prone as I was to consider chance the sole ruler of human events, I could not deny that, in my almost miraculous preservation from self-destruction, a higher agent than chance was concerned. Struck with the peculiarity, as I affected to consider it, I fell on my knees, and attempted to address that Great Being, whose laws I had broken and whose ordinances I had insulted, in the language which, in my childhood, my mother had taught me to use. I could not collect my thoughts; the fumes of the poison almost suffocated me; Würmer's image seemed leering maliciously at me; and I thought I heard his sarcastic chuckle. I rose from my knees, after an ineffectual attempt to supplicate the Divine mercy, reasoning with myself that all mention of the name of the Deity could be but priestcraft, else, were He so benevolent as He was represented, why had He not comforted my injured pride, and enabled me to get the better of my self-aborrence? I was then but an infidel scoffer, and I saw not the mercy which had given me this call to amendment. With these horrible reflections, my mind was occupied the whole of that momentous night. Oh! where my life of the duration of Methuselah's, never would the remembrance of what I then suffered escape me.

"The next day I met one of the parties whose gold I had so disgracefully acquired; he again desired me to play; I at first declined; but the pertinacity of his adherence to his request led me to suppose, either that Würmer had broken his engagement with me, or that he was not the only person by whom I was detected. This maddening idea increased my despondency considerably. I complied with his wish with an appearance of frankness, and, in a guarded manner, contrived to lose to him almost the whole of the money I had previously won. This success disarmed whatever suspicion he might have had of my honour, and I heard nothing further from him likely to cause dread of exposure. In the evening, punctual to my engagement, I attended Würmer at our club—for such in reality the house might be termed. I not only met the young man, but his father, the latter an elderly man of paternal appearance, whom, at first sight, I dreaded for his seeming austerity. I was on the point of

reproaching young Würmer—Conrad, I think, was his name—with having acted treacherously towards me; but a bland smile and a shake of the hand removed my doubts. Both received me in a friendly manner; but there was some pause before the business of the evening was alluded to. At length Conrad began:

“‘I think,’ said he ‘I have seen some admirable representations of other persons’ handwriting executed by you. My father and myself, having need of your skill, we should feel obliged by your writing, accordingly to our dictation, in imitation of the autograph to be produced.’

“The old man—who I found was as great a villain as the son, under a more demure appearance—here brought forth an ordinary business letter, signed, ‘Hardfels!’”

“Hardfels, say you!” exclaimed Staelburg, almost wild with excitement, his repugnance at hearing the sickening details of a life of vice vanishing as he heard that familiar name.

“If I mistake not, that was the signature appended. Are you also acquainted with the injured lord? But I am resolved to do all that I can towards the retrieval of my error. Would that more were practicable, and you should know all! Great was my disgust at being, as it were, dictated to. I knew not that Würmer had so deeply scanned my abilities; but I was not allowed much time for thought. Having given me a few minutes to study the character used, the old Count began, in a calm and collected manner, to indite to me the substance of the document. It was, if I remember rightly (and the remorse occasioned by the remembrance of my offences has stamped them indelibly on my mind), a letter purporting to be from the Baron of Hardfels to that she-wolf, Catherine de Medicis, alluding to the advantages to be derived by the union of two such powerful countries as France and the German empire; the zeal which her son Charles IX. had ever displayed in the protection of the Romish religion, and the remissness of the young Emperor Maximilian on the same subject; and concluding by stating, in guarded though unmistakable terms, that should she enter into the writer’s views, she might rely on his active co-operation with her to obtain so desirable an end.

"My chagrin soon vanished, and I felt flattered in being employed in so delicate a matter. Ambition numbers the vicious as well as the high-minded among her slaves; and, on reflection, I rejoiced that Würmer had named such easy terms. I knew that had he demanded a more arduous task from me, there remained nothing but submission: so that I set carefully to work, and produced, in a short time, a complete masterpiece of forgery. The counterfeit signature was then examined with the real one, and found to correspond to a nicety. My performance gave great satisfaction, and I could not help priding myself on the success of my attempt. In fact, such was the resemblance between the autograph and forgery, that even the Baron himself could scarcely have denied their identity. When I had completed my task, the Count folded up the letter, and desired me to direct it to some fictitious name, which I forget, as also I am at a loss to account for Würmer's motive in employing me; and of course I asked no questions. I presume by this time the unfortunate Hardfels has undergone the penalties of high treason. God grant he still lives! Tell me—oh! tell me—am I the murderer of him also?"

It was a long time before Staelburg could summon his faculties so as to reply to the monk's question, so much had his awful narrative astounded him. When, however, he had got over his astonishment, he answered: "Be comforted so far; when I last saw or heard of the Baron, he was still alive; but neither his life nor honour are safe in the custody of the Würmers."

"God be thanked!" said the miserable Fray Diego, heaving a deep sigh; "there still remains an opportunity of saving him. But, to resume my subject. After I had finished the direction, a seal bearing some cognizance or other, no doubt engraved in imitation of that with which the letter to the Count was impressed, was applied to my forgery, and broken open; thus every necessary step seemed taken. Wine was then called for by the young man, his father appearing rather averse to bear the expense, and we terminated the evening in festivity. Intending to leave that part of the country with the utmost despatch, lest Würmer should break faith with me, I proposed to start at a comparatively

early hour. To this the Baron objected, but ultimately suffered my horse to be saddled, while he prepared a bowl of Hippocras as a loving-cup. A brimming glass was offered to me. Fearful of becoming intoxicated, and so losing the caution I had previously preserved, I drank but moderately of it. Immediately after this I mounted my horse, and took leave of the Würmers, with many expressions of profound gratitude on their parts for the obligation I had conferred upon them. I had not proceeded far on my homeward way, when, from a violent pain in the stomach, a fiery glow of the brain, and a horrible nausea, a fearful suspicion crossed my mind that the cup of Hippocras was deeply drugged. Oh, the agonies I then experienced! All my doubts as to the reality of a future state were removed; and, like the devils, I believed and trembled. I galloped, fleet as the wind, to my dwelling, my strength gradually failing me, and I thought each moment would have been my last. On reaching my abode, I ran, with a swiftness of which I should have thought myself at that time incapable, to my sleeping-room, and from the various medicines there, concocted, in haste and fear, a powerful antidote. Notwithstanding my previous attempt at suicide, I had not the courage to meet my offended Creator, and I eagerly clung to life. For some time, however, I remained in a terrible suspense between life and death, but, from my perfect acquaintance with poison, and the degree to which, like Mithridates, I had accustomed myself to its effects, I began to amend. I endured, nevertheless, the most torturing pains of body; but how can I describe what passed in my mind? Fortunately for the soul, no less than for the body, the deadly drug was not taken in sufficient quantity to destroy my life; but it produced a lasting debility of the system, and no doubt laid the foundation of my rapidly approaching dissolution. Thus, you see, in some measure I beheld the fulfilment of the awful warning, 'Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed.' The fierce judgment of the Almighty had more effect on me than the previous still small voice of the preserver, and on my soul the blighting poison had a salutary operation. I began to think of the innate evil of sin, which could induce one man to attempt the murder of

another for whom he professed the greatest friendship ; and I was convinced that the system both Würmer and myself were adopting must be very defective, if it sanctioned any design on his part to get rid of me in so diabolical a manner. In this manner, you see, I, still imperfectly acquainted with the means by which the Allwise convinces us of sin, became a law to myself. I resolved to fly from ungrateful man into seclusion, not thinking that the crimes I had committed left society the creditor. To all inquiries made by Würmer or others after my health, I caused it to be given out that my death was hourly expected, from a disease similar to the plague. All but Würmer shunned any further contact with the infected house ; and he, bold though he was, dared not come and mock my dying agonies. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I took my departure from Germany in so secret a manner that none could track me, and then circulated a report that, having died of the plague, my funeral had taken place in private. The scheme was successful : my death was generally believed in ; and I reached Cordova, my native town, a few years ago, in disguise, unknown even to my former bosom friends. I was affected beyond description to hear that my mother, having been informed of my abandoned course of life, had died broken-hearted some years before. Thus I was the means of murdering my fond and faithful mother."

Again he paused ; a convulsion shook his slender form, and the veins of his forehead distended to a fearful degree. The violence of his emotion was soon spent, and he recovered sufficiently to proceed :

"Bitter as my self-reproach was, I could not but feel a melancholy consolation that my broken-hearted parent knew not all my foul crimes, else, thought I, surely she would have pronounced against me a curse more awful than that of Cain ; whereas, I understand, her last prayer was for her ungrateful, miscreant son,—her last words a blessing on his head. The remorse I experienced on this occasion, joined to that I had previously suffered, brought me to take a deeper and better view of my sin. I saw in it something more than temporal inconvenience to myself, and in some measure I felt 'repentance unto

salvation not to be repented of.' My first step towards reformation was the purchase of an indulgence from the Pope; afterwards, doubting its efficacy, and considering penance and humiliation as the only means of making my peace with God, I decided on adopting the monastic life: I presented myself at the gate of the convent, and prayed to be admitted, even in the lowest capacity. Notwithstanding the dissipation into which I had plunged, and the pernicious habits which I had contracted, I had not altogether divested myself of my prepossessing manners and easy grace; and my request was readily granted. If ever the monk's garment covered sincerity of purpose, it was in my case. Immediately after my joining the order, no acts of abasement, however rigorous, were omitted—night after night my cell rang with the sound of the lash. For days together no food passed my lips; and if it were possible for our penances to atone for our offences, I would humbly state my conviction that I should be among the number of the beatified. I must also inform you that my time was occasionally employed on subjects more beneficial to my fellow-creatures. Far and near I visited the sick, comforted the afflicted, relieved the destitute, under the burning sun or the driving rain, in darkness or daylight; and at last I had the gratification of finding that 'when the ear heard me then it blessed me.' But, alas! how unworthy was I of these blessings! how much had I to cast out, to learn, and to practise. Such, however, was my reputation for piety, that, far and near, I passed for a model of sanctity. Although I fondly flattered myself that what I heard must be correct, and that penances and vigils were the passports to bliss, I could not feel altogether at my ease on the subject. Until this scepticism had got possession of me, when not employed in attendance upon the sick or poor, in self-flagellation or other penances, I was in the habit of telling my beads, and performing other acts of devotion. Latterly, with the view of getting the better of my superstitious fears (as I thought them) touching the efficacy of my good works, I added the study of the writings of the fathers, on which I entered with my accustomed energy; so that before long I became, from my knowledge of theology, the pride of the

monastery. Although a careful perusal of these works might have been of incalculable benefit to me, yet, to my mind, so eagerly leaning towards conviction, many of them spoke peace, peace, where in reality there was no peace,—or, at least, wresting them to my own destruction, such was the interpretation I put on many ambiguities. My joy was short-lived yet sweet, and I hoped that my salvation was worked out; but, in addition to the works of the fathers of the Church, there was one other book which I longed to read. This was the Bible. At length I found one in a closet in my cell, where it had, no doubt, been placed by my predecessor, a man of unquestionable learning and exemplary piety. I gladly studied it. Much of comfort as I found it to contain, it also spoke to my benighted mind strongly of judgment. One passage especially struck me: ‘The soul that sinneth it shall die.’ This I thought impossible, as at variance with the received doctrines of the Church. If, I reasoned, death is under all circumstances the portion of the sinner, who can then escape? In the language of one of whom I was at that time profoundly ignorant, I might have stated my belief, that ‘death came upon all men, for that all have sinned;’ and I almost thought, ‘Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die.’ This awakened within me a habit of inquiry, and night after night was the little lamp burning in my cell, while my eyes were turned to that real Shekinah—that lamp of bright, clear, and celestial light—which had faintly illumined my soul. Again I read: ‘We are altogether unprofitable servants.’ This I marked as an absurdity. It was clearly in man’s unaided power, not only to save his own soul, but to earn of Heaven the remission of the offences of his friends, dead or living,—he, then, could not be said to be unprofitable. I studied St. Paul deeply, and, with a humble spirit, my doubts were removed; and I took comfort especially at the passage: ‘For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.’ I read also: ‘If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world;’ and I comprehended the mystery. From

that time forth I laid aside the whip, and betook myself to a deep penitence of the heart. I cried: 'God be merciful to me a sinner.' The veil which my ignorance had thrown over my sin was raised, and I knew not where to look for grace and mercy. —But I weary you: this is no part of my subject. Suffice it to say, whatever views I previously entertained of my own righteousness were totally discarded, and I forbore to look to myself for justification; but there was another and a fearful question to be solved. We are told not only to feel sorrow for the past, and act better for the time to come, but also to make restitution. I had hoped this might have been dispensed with; but the same light which made me look to justification by faith (our works, however acceptable and praiseworthy, being unable to cleanse us from Adam's corruption) enabled me to form better views of the effect of the Pope's indulgence. I saw nothing in the Bible which could satisfy me of the power of the Pope of Rome, in consideration of money, to grant remission of sin. Even assuming that, by virtue of the Divine grant to St. Peter, his successors have the gift of relieving offences in their own names, in what does the exercise of this power, as a means of procuring money, differ from the sin of Simon Magus? This last view of the case staggered me. Notwithstanding the blessings promised in the inspired volume to repentant sinners, I feared myself lost, as dead in trespasses and sins, and I cried, 'O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' I became indeed the most miserable of men, but I had not the moral courage publicly to announce myself guilty of the crimes I have now confessed to you. Absorbed in the awful reflection of the danger I was incurring from attempting to cloak my transgressions, but not daring to reveal the truth, I lost my former zealous, cheerful character, and became gloomy and morose. My superiors noticed the alteration in my conduct, and repeatedly endeavoured to restore me to a more contented state of mind. The good, affectionate Brother Christopher, grieved at my altered conduct, remonstrated with me on my neglect of the study of theology, for which I displayed such aptitude. Now my theology is of another class: the Bible is become my text-book, and every successive

perusal strengthens the views I have taken. Would that it lay in my power, not only to conform to its precepts, but also to rectify my error! then might I die with full confidence in the Saviour's merits. Of late, indeed, I have displayed so much indifference to my conventual duties, that penances have been imposed upon me by my superior. To these I submitted patiently, knowing the kind spirit which dictated them. Had they been unjust, what right had I, stained with every vice, to complain of injustice? On the evening of your arrival here, I was not suffered to join the brethren in their repast; and I do not know whether I am deputed to watch on you as a punishment or a privilege. My life is fast drawing to a close, and if I make a full acknowledgment of my error, I must presently set about it, 'for the night cometh wherein no man can work.' A few days, at the farthest, will terminate my career; and what will then become of my soul? Will not my portion be 'where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched?' I feel it is impossible to repair the grievous wrongs I have done, and the fear of departing from this world the author of so much unremedied evil embitters my hours, and makes me fear lest He who had mercy on the expiring thief may reject me, as having taken no steps towards atonement for my past faults. Well would it have been for me had I taken the advice of good Brother Christopher, and endeavoured to appease my conscience by an earlier confession; but my faith was meek, and I dreaded the curse of the confessor. By first putting trust in me, you incited me to do the like towards you; and you will not now wonder at my objection to administer absolution to you, and my wish that indulgences, penances, or mortifications could expiate sin. Let me beg your counsel as to the best method of doing what little justice I can; for already a feeling of weakness suggests that even this night my soul may be required of me."

Staelburg listened with the utmost commiseration to the revelations of the conscience-stricken monk; and as soon as he could recover from its effects upon him, he answered: "I hope you may be mistaken as to the nearness of the approach of death; but I agree with you, that an explicit acknowledgment of the

failings you mention, is the only course likely to be of advantage, either to yourself or the persons whom your conduct may prejudice. I deeply sympathise with your feelings, but the fulness of your confession proves your sincerity; and I believe your remorse may have exaggerated the circumstances you allude to. To be frank with you, the Baron of Hardfels is a personal friend of my own. He has a daughter, to whom, if my life be spared, I may be united, and consequently I take a deep interest in his welfare. Do you not remember my confession to you, that on many occasions I feared my conduct towards a rival exceeded what was justifiable. I do not know whether I mentioned the name of this rival. It was the Baron of Würmer. It has been long observed that the unfortunate Baron of Hardfels has been considerably under the power of Würmer. By what means this power was obtained, I am ignorant; but should it be in consequence of the document you refer to, a written statement of the facts of the case, if you have no objection to the adoption of such a course, might be of signal service to him. A similar admission might in other cases greatly promote justice."

"An angel of light are you to me!" said Diego, in a tone of more gladness. "The admission you speak of shall be instantly given." So saying, he left the cell, and soon after returned, bearing some writing materials, accompanied by the Prior of the convent and Brother Christopher. After having, with becoming abasement, explained to them the reason of his requiring their attendance, he distinctly expressed, in writing, the share he had had in the transaction. Towards the close of his statement, his strength began to fail him, and the compassionate Brother Christopher offered to write according to his dictation. As if performing a task which, though difficult, he was resolved to fulfil, the unhappy monk thankfully declined his offer. When he had concluded, he subscribed his name, and affixed his seal to the document, and desired the witnesses to attest his signature thereto. They complied; and all formalities being completed, the penitent handed over the paper to Staelburg, expressing a hope that it might still be possible to avert the danger which threatened Hardfels. He then took another sheet, and was about to make

an acknowledgment of other crimes; but the pen dropped from his feeble fingers, and he stared wildly round the room, screaming, 'Forgive me! forgive me, the hypocrisy I have practised! Believe me, I deeply regret the past, and humbly trust that the Saviour of our souls, who died for all, may plead for me.'

"Amen!" fervently responded his auditors. Poor Diego scarcely heard their prayer. In his frenzy, a large blood-vessel was broken, and the unconscious form of the dying monk was carried out from the agonised gaze of Staelburg. His head swam, and a swoon for a time removed the impression of the awful things he had heard. None observed this, and he woke not until the faint sound of the passing bell announced that the soul of the penitent Fray Diego had gone to meet its Creator. Let us trust that his lot was bliss. Brother Christopher soon after made his appearance, and informed Staelburg that the sufferer's countenance wore a tranquil, almost a triumphant, expression, as he faintly murmured, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

The young Count's recovery was greatly retarded by the excitement produced by the monk's confession; and the anxiety he felt to free Hardfels from the influence of Würmer was anything but beneficial. Nevertheless, such was the care and attention bestowed upon him by the worthy Christopher and his fellows, that he began by degrees to acquire strength. He paid a visit to the tomb of Diego, and offered up a heartfelt prayer for his soul, which, whether of service or not to the spirit of the departed, at least came from a fond and reverent heart, such as professors of any religion need not despise.

As soon as his kind friends considered it prudent, Staelburg prepared to resume his journey. All offers of remuneration were declined by the exemplary, charitable brethren, who even desired to furnish him with the means of paying his homeward expenses. Notwithstanding all Staelburg's joy at being in a position again to see his native country, he could not repress a tear at bidding farewell to the really benevolent monks of Montserrat. Long after did he recall their kindness; and good cause for complaint, as he had, against the Spanish Inquisition, he considered that

their noble conduct was quite sufficient to remove any unfavourable idea he might have formed of the Spanish Romanists.

He journeyed in safety, without any great display of speed, towards Barcelona, where, disposing of his horse for a far less sum than he gave for it, and drawing upon a wealthy merchant for a small sum of money, he was enabled to pay the expenses of his passage. Fortunately for him, the voyage was a pleasant one, and shorter than the generality; and he, with his scanty kit, was landed at Genoa, where he remained but a short time; and having obtained another steed, started for that object dear to the absent of all nations, complexions, and ranks, but especially to a real German,—fatherland.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The Imperial Chamber at Spires, and its Proceedings.

THE time during which Staelburg had been confined to the bed of sickness had been used to good advantage by the enemies, alike of himself and Hardfels. Würmer, with that tact which seemed never to desert him, had taken the preliminary steps for the impeachment of the latter; and the Imperial Chamber, to which belonged jurisdiction in such criminal cases as concerned the safety and welfare of the empire, had already set its cumbersome machinery in motion, with the view of executing justice on the delinquent.

Ethic writers may justly maintain that, so far from being a creature of civil polity, a love of justice is the intuitive impulse of the human race, which no moral depression, no endurance of actual tyranny, can wholly eradicate. The language of the heart is certainly as good a criterion of the feelings of the mind as "Aristotle's cheeks;" and it is admitted, by those who never studied either the one or the other, that the famous Pharisee could lay no claim to a work of supererogation in avowing himself no favourer of injustice. Perhaps, of all the various nations

of the earth, none have proved themselves more impressed with a spirit of equity than the various Teutonic races. Who can peruse the "incomparable Blackstone" without noticing the warm adulation he rather lavishes than bestows upon the institutions and customs of our Saxon forefathers? To them we, probably, owe the main of our system of jurisprudence. In their time, notwithstanding some absurd ideas respecting ordeals, the result of ignorance and piety combined, a greater share of the real principles of justice is to be found than in the practice of the more chivalrous Norman, who "*nihil non arroget amoris*." In the mother country, also, although the course of justice might be much obstructed by the feuds of an aristocracy more renowned for valour than sense, a reverence for it still held great influence over the minds of the people. At the time of our tale, Germany, not long resuscitated from the spell which feudal institutions exercised over it by the masterly hand of Maximilian, the system of justice was much impeded by numerous obstructions. Nevertheless, these being removed, no general complaint of partiality could be raised against the administrators of the law.

To poor Hardfels, Butler's remark,

"Thus Justice, while she winks at crimes,
Stumbles on innocence sometimes,"

seemed singularly applicable; and the charge laid against him being one of great magnitude, and apparently well substantiated by evidence, the president of the Imperial Court and his assistants devoted their best energies to the solution of the matter. When the Count of Staelburg entered Vienna, that city was almost deserted by its fashionable inhabitants, who had attended their sovereign to Spire to await the decision of the learned of the land in the all-absorbing case before them. The official to whom the recent exile applied for admission to the Imperial presence was tempted to a breach of his gravity on learning Staelburg's ignorance of the subject. He, however, politely informed his applicant of the facts of the case, and added that, if his mission was of moment, he had better seek an audience of the Emperor at Spire. At this intelligence, the Count, in a maze of bewilder-

ment, took leave of the warder, and wandered up the street of the capital, to collect his thoughts and decide on the most advisable course to be adopted. Among the few persons he encountered, one there was whose stately figure and yet pale face he could not forget. The person in question was habited as one of the imperial equerries, but, notwithstanding his gay attire, his dejected appearance would have enlisted the sympathy of even the most anti-ceremonious republican. Staelburg seemed to be no stranger to him, and after regarding the young noble earnestly for a few seconds, a faint smile of recognition flitted over his wan features, as he passionately exclaimed : " My earliest and dearest friend ! is it indeed you ? "

Staelburg could not be mistaken : it was William of Hardfels he beheld—but so changed from the handsome, cheerful youth whom, but a few years since, he left at Kielsworth.

" My William, are you here ? " said he, almost mechanically, as he affectionately embraced his friend.

A tear fell from the young Hardfels, as he replied in despondent accents : " Reprove me not ; my place should be in the prison of my doomed father, to cheer him through the vale of misery he is traversing. Alas ! my friend, they have sold innocent blood—the destruction of the guiltless is inevitable. Had it not been for the entreaties of my unhappy parent's well-wishers—nay, the desire of the Emperor himself—I would not have quitted the cell of the condemned, for such I fear it now is. My friend Karl remains at Spires, to bring me intelligence when the undeserved sentence is passed."

" Take hope ! " said Staelburg ; " things are not so desperate as you may imagine. Let us lose no time in setting out for Spires ; and who can say but that, by the time we reach it, He who judges rightly may have raised up some evidence of your unfortunate father's innocence ? "

" Ah ! messenger of hope ! " said the wretched William ; " breathe no such fallacious ideas into my mind. My father's doom is inevitable. His rank and apparent ingratitude will admit of no plea for mercy. I pray you, however, as you love me, use your influence with the Emperor, that he who will soon

be no more may not die the death of a common felon. When all is over, then, divested of these habiliments, the sight of which I loathe, I will spend my days in sad seclusion, with you for my comforter, near the scene of our former happiness. How terrible indeed has been the vengeance of these Würmers! what remains of my father's prosperity? his beloved daughter dead, or taken from his roof, who can say where, if, indeed, she be alive? His own life on the point of being taken for crimes he never committed! Already I seem to see the multitude scoff at me, as the son of the condemned traitor—the disgraced Hardfels!"

"Have firmer trust in Him who pleads the cause of the innocent," responded Staelburg. "Let us obtain our horses immediately, that we may be at Spires ere the sitting of the court be terminated."

William shuddered as he answered: "Be it so; but probably by the time we reach Spires the tragedy will be completed, and Hardfels may have no more a lord—the son no more a father!"

"God forbid!" said Staelburg; cheerfully, almost tempted to reveal to William the full extent of his knowledge, yet dreading the effect of a sudden change from despair to joy on his excited friend. "But time passes, and at present each moment is of consequence. Some days must elapse ere we reach our destination, however swiftly we may travel."

Horses were soon obtained at the young equerry's bidding, and in a short space of time the two friends—the one wrapt in deep melancholy, the other glad of having an opportunity of disclosing the mystery he had discovered—set out at a brisk pace for Spires.

"By what means," said William, when his spirits had become more revived, "did you obtain your recall to Germany? or has your blind affection for the persecuted prompted you, at any risk to yourself, to watch over our waning fortunes?"

"Nay, William, I can claim no such chivalrous sympathy with you. I returned to Germany in consequence of the imperial revocation of the edict of banishment to which I was subject. I have, in more instances than one, detected well-laid schemes of the Würmers, and perhaps I may be of service on the present occasion."

"I thank you for the good-will you display towards my doomed father; but there is no room for hope of averting his fate."

Full of exaggerated ideas of the ruin pending over his house, William withstood all Staelburg's attempts at conversation, and mile after mile was passed in the same gloomy silence.

Relays of horses were everywhere placed at the disposal of the imperial equerry; and on the fourth day of their journey the friends found themselves at no great distance from Spires. As Staelburg was unacquainted with the route, William officiated as guide, and indicated with the utmost taciturnity the direction to be taken. At length the road appeared more familiar to the Count; but before he could call William's attention to the fact, he found his melancholy guide had come to a complete halt at a short distance before him.

"Look, Staelburg!" said William, pointing to the castle which had so long been his home, and of which, from its lofty position, a full view could now be obtained; "observe you not that? Do you not remember the many happy hours which, from our childhood upwards, have been spent within those walls? Now, alas! all goes from us; for this alone I would not grieve; but how can I endure to behold the escutcheon, which my ancestors have ennobled by deeds of valour, now defaced as that of a traitor to his God and country?"

Staelburg gazed with deep interest on the massive building above him. Not a tree seemed felled in the little wood surrounding it; the terrace remained in the state he left it; and the curiously ornamented gateway, through which he had so often passed, seemed in no respect altered. He almost fancied he could discern the figure of old Elspeth without the walls; but as the view, although bringing emotions alike painful and pleasurable to himself, seemed productive of most bitter agony to his companion, he inquired whether it was William's intention to make a tarry at Hardfels.

The latter shook his head sadly: "No, Augustus," said he, "I will spare myself that ordeal. I may not see it again. But when the curse falls—for a curse will always attend ill-acquired wealth—perhaps some such person as your housekeeper, Kaisa,

will survey its moss-grown battlements and falling tower, and tell her children of the injured Hardfels. I am the last of my race, and am thankful that there are none others to share the ignominy of the family. Let us go."

Dashing his spurs with unnecessary force into his horse's flanks, William proceeded on his journey, and it was not long before Spires was in view.

Meanwhile the court, in which the business of the empire was transacted, was crowded by the imperial courtiers, and others interested in the matter pending, and the majority of whom, notwithstanding the thirst for novelty and excitement to which we are all so prone, felt a deep sympathy with the accused. In his prosperity, though stern and reserved, he had conducted himself with prudence and affability; and those who rejoiced in his fall were very few. His defence—though even his dearest friends could anticipate nothing but failure—was, at his special request, accepted by Herman Von Staelburg, uncle to our hero; and many of the former pupils of the experienced advocate lent their services. So far from feeling depressed by the Herculean task he had undertaken, the counsellor maintained a cheerful aspect, and informed his desponding client that he had seen many cases, presenting a less favourable appearance, terminate in a satisfactory manner. No stone was left unturned to promote so desirable an end; and Herman Von Staelburg's clear head was taxed to the uttermost for the benefit of Hardfels. The day in question was the one when it was anticipated the proceedings would be terminated, and the fate of the prisoner ascertained.

The President of the tribunal sat in a canopied chair, while around him were the assistant judges, some sixteen in number, busily engaged in conning their notes, or entering into whispered consultations between themselves as to the effect of each additional feature of the evidence. Near the chief judge, but on a woolsack in no manner distinguished from those of the other officials of the court, was seated Maximilian II., the ruler over one of the most mighty monarchies of the earth, yet, nevertheless, adopting the behaviour of a disinterested spectator, rather than of a party deeply concerned in the matters at issue. The blood of the

Cæsars certainly flowed in his veins,* and he whose constant thought was for the benefit of his people, was by no means an unmoved observer of the scene before him. Every eye was directed to the unhappy Hardfels, who met the stedfast gaze of the multitude without the least symptom of trepidation or guilt. His was a great and well-disciplined mind; his conscience accused him of no breach of duty to his sovereign; and his countenance, pale and wasted though it was, betrayed no feeling of shame—no sense of dishonour. Like Glaucus in the Pompeian arena, yet possessed of principles to which even the high-minded Athenian was a stranger, he met the glances directed towards him, not with a scowl of defiance, not with an expression of abject fear, but as conscious innocence should meet misled, but well-meaning judges. His spare figure, thin hair, and resigned mien, were sufficient to dispel any resentment from the hearts of those present; and the Emperor and the dispensers of justice, although entertaining little doubt of his culpability, could but pity as they heard. By his side was the indefatigable Herman, while his assistants were ranged about him.

In the place appropriated to the witnesses stood Conrad Würmer and his aged father, both clad in mourning, and both preserving an appearance of the greatest commiseration with him whom their false testimony was consigning to unmerited ignominy. The fatal document, on which the prosecution was based, was placed in the hands of the President, and the younger Würmer awaited any questions he might be pleased to make thereon. Such, however, was the appearance of genuineness which the cunningly devised fable bore, and so glaring was the treason in the offer it contained of the throne of Germany to the false Charles IX., that the President was unable to throw out any doubts of the fact. He accordingly intimated to the prisoner's counsel that he was prepared to hear any evidence the latter might adduce to upset the letter in question.

The letter produced being the first of a contemplated series, no good could be done by calling on the party to whom it was

* "She is not handsome; but the blood of the Cæsars is in her veins."—*Napoleon's opinions of Maria Louisa.*

really addressed to deny the receipt of any previous or subsequent suggestions on the subject; and the advocate's first question was, as Würmer had anticipated, by what means had a document of so much importance come into his possession?

To this, Würmer, according to his preconceived plan, replied that a page in Hardfels' employ, known by the name of Gottlieb, had consulted him, without any apparent reason for so doing, as to the best course to be taken to Paris, where, he afterwards added, he was commissioned to take a letter; that in consequence of the air of mystery observed by the bearer, he was induced to request a sight of it, with which request the youth, who was not famous for over-keen intellects, complied. The address on it confirmed his suspicions as to some foul play being intended, and he then took the precaution of ascertaining the contents with which he had acquainted the court (in the presence of his father), after which he considered it necessary to retain the document.

With so ingenuous an air was this explanation given, that however Herman Von Staelburg might regard it as a fiction, it was difficult for him to force his ideas on others. He therefore proceeded:

"Such a course must require urgent circumstances to justify it. But, admitting your tale to be correct, how came you, during so many years, to preserve so strict a silence on this head? Was it not your duty to warn the Emperor of the danger to which he was exposed?"

"I take shame to myself," said Würmer, "for my remissness. But to bring evil on the friend of my bosom was a most distasteful duty to me, and one which I sought by all possible means to avoid. Believing I had prevented the execution of the Baron's plot, I took no means to bring the traitor to justice. At length my conscience loudly reproached me for my concealment of so heinous a crime, and unable longer to endure its stings, I determined to do my duty, however disagreeable, nothing doubting but that the justly excited wrath of my injured sovereign will pass on me some heavy sentence for my neglect." He paused as if overcome by emotion, and tears rolled down his swarthy cheeks.

A voice in a remote corner of the chamber exclaimed: "How

easy does duty become when interest and ambition urge it onwards!"

Würmer slightly blushed at these bold words, and the eyes of all were turned upon the speaker, who was discovered to be our old friend Godfrey, and who having, by the usual privilege of folly, obtained admission into the council-chamber, could not restrain the temptation to vent a sarcastic jest on the odious witness. The allusion to the motives which actuated the seemingly right-principled Würmer was hailed by a low murmur of approbation by the assembly; and although Godfrey was reproved for his forwardness, it was in a tone rather of encouragement than censure.

The advocate's face, which had hitherto brightened with a glow peculiar to a hopeful nature, and the consciousness of great abilities, became, in a measure, shaded, and he appeared foiled by the seeming candour of the witness he was examining.

"But surely," he continued, "some previous suspicion must have induced you to enter with such zeal on so ordinary a subject as the transmission of a letter to Paris? Had you any reason to doubt the prisoner's fidelity to the State?"

"By no means," answered Würmer; "I always esteemed him as an honourable man and a good subject; and I can only express a hope that the Emperor's clemency may spare his life, and give him an opportunity of acknowledging and atoning for his error. The sole reason which induced me to attach importance to so commonplace an event was, that, having at the time to which I allude serious thoughts of adopting the Protestant creed"—

"Certes, a valuable acquisition to any religion!" interposed Godfrey, in an audible whisper.

Würmer scowled with rage as he proceeded: "Having, as I before stated, great leanings towards the reformed faith, to which I knew the Baron of Hardfels was much opposed, I was not without some fear that the blessings religious concord secured to us by the accession of our beloved Emperor were about to be overclouded by the fanatical zeal of my friend. This presentiment, absurd as it may seem, took a strong hold on me, and subsequent events demonstrated its truth."

"Am I to suppose you devised no tale to deceive the Baron of Hardfels as to the safety of his letter?" observed the President, blandly.

"Nay, my lord," answered Würmer; "it is probable the page, for his own purposes, told some falsehood; but I was no party to it, and I took an early opportunity of informing the detected man of my knowledge."

"What effect did it produce on him?" continued the President.

"He was for a long time in a most excited state. When he became calmer, he besought me, by the love I bore him, to suppress my knowledge; and attempted to bribe me by large offers, including even the hand of his daughter in marriage, with a queenly dowry; but I was proof against his bribes."

At these words, Hardfels' countenance assumed a flush of anger, and some such word as "liar" passed him; but on reflection, considering his enemy's perjury only worthy of contempt, he allowed him to proceed.

"It is true," added Würmer, "that at one time the charms of the damsel exercised influence over me; but as she was by no means disposed to give me encouragement, I abandoned my ideas, scorning (had other motives failed to deter me from prosecuting my suit) to make the innocent daughter the sacrifice for the guilty father."

Many more questions were put to the crafty Conrad; but such was the ability with which he answered or evaded them, as suited best his purpose, preserving a show of great respect for justice, and a reluctance to implicate the accused, that his evidence remained unshaken. Probably ashamed of confessing the share which Würmer had had in Bertha's contemplated immurement in a cloister, the unfortunate Baron never mentioned the fact to his legal adviser; and, to his great satisfaction, Würmer escaped examination on that head. The old Count of Würmer was afterwards subjected to a searching scrutiny as to the knowledge he possessed of the mysterious affair; but no discrepancy of the slightest moment could be detected between his account and that of his son.

Herman Von Staelburg seemed entirely to have lost his wonted confidence; he looked careworn and anxious, and his concluding address, on behalf of his client, was not delivered with the boldness of one who doubts not to carry the feelings of his hearers with him. Nevertheless, it was pointed and eloquent; he aptly alluded to the few weak points in the witnesses' statements; the ease with which a fraud might be perpetrated; the high character for political, as well as moral integrity, which the accused had borne; and called upon the judges, as they loved that justice which ever leans towards mercy, to give a guarded credence to the testimony they had heard.

At the close of his speech, the Emperor—the rapid workings of whose brow betrayed great mental agitation—rose from his seat, and fixing his piercing eye on the prisoner, said in a hollow voice:

"Hardfels, I have loved and trusted you as my own brother; tell me, as you value truth, is the document we have heard read your genuine act, or that of an enemy? The judges here present are certainly the arbitrators of the law; but for the personal satisfaction of one who is unwilling to believe you guilty of the black crime with which you are charged, speak boldly,—assure me you are innocent!"

"Your majesty may rely that my last hours will not find me deviating from the path of truth, in which I have hitherto unflinchingly trod," answered Hardfels, in a solemn manner. "I blame not those who would condemn me on the evidence brought against me; but as I must soon have to appear before another tribunal, I sincerely protest my utter innocence of the atrocious crime with which false witnesses have charged me. But the counterfeit is too well executed to admit of any hesitation in its reception by the judges of this court, and may not my blood be laid to their charge!"

The Emperor heaved a sigh, partly from a sense of relief at Hardfels' assurance, and partly as if ashamed of his earnestness; and the assembled judges, apparently totally unmoved by his behaviour, consulted with each other on the decision to which the evidence would lead them. The friends of the prisoner in

vain attempted to assume an air of composure, for their faces could not conceal the gloomy view they took of the bearing of the court. Hardfels alone remained calm and collected,—not a muscle winced; and the glances of triumph which the Würmers, now secure of their point, directed towards him, produced no effect. To him the bitterness of death was past; he only awaited the official ratification of the doom which his own judgment had pronounced upon himself.

The time approaches for the announcement of the judges' decision, and all appears lost if the Count of Staelburg do not forthwith give his important testimony on behalf of the accused.

The two friends had by no means relaxed their speed, and reached Spires as soon as the jaded condition of their horses would permit. All seemed life and activity in the ancient town. The noblest blood in Germany was contained within its walls, and the all-engrossing topic was eagerly discussed by the numerous idlers, both patrician and plebeian, in the streets. By these the anxious travellers were assured that all was over, and that sentence of death was passed on the prisoner. The way to the court-house being indicated, both hurried thither, in the fear that the news they had heard was too true. Arrived at the chamber, the Count scarce demanded admission of the guard stationed at the door, but made a forcible entrance into the already densely crowded apartment.

The horrifying pause which had pervaded the court began to yield to a low hum of expectancy, as the President, having finished his conference with his assistants, prepared to deliver the judgment of the bench. Before, however, he could accomplish his purpose, a voice was heard near the door of the chamber, screaming rather than exclaiming: "Stay, my lord! .Hear me! hear me!"

The dead silence which had again reigned in the assembly, preparatory to the sentence of the judges being promulgated, was broken by loud shouts of approbation and excitement, as one of the officers of the court made a way through the crowd for the travel-stained Count of Staelburg to approach the witness-box. When order was at length restored, the President inquired of him what reason he had for making so great a disturbance.

"Read," said Staelburg, in a slightly imperious tone, "the deposition which I produce, and then condemn, if you can, the prisoner before you!"

Loud cheers followed this speech, and not all the labours of the energetic officials could prevail upon the multitude to suppress their enthusiasm. Among the chief of the rioters was our friend Godfrey, who, in defiance of all law and order, was gesticulating and declaiming violently.

For an instant, Würmer so far lost his courage as to yield to a tremulous inclination, as he beheld him of whom he thought he had effectually disposed, and ascertained the feelings with which he was regarded. He soon, however, divested himself of his trepidation, and observed, contemptuously: "Some artifice, of course, to defraud the scaffold of its victim!"

"You are mistaken," replied Godfrey, who had succeeded, amidst the din, in overhearing him: "one victim will be substituted for another; but otherwise the scaffold's right will be respected."

Having ascertained the purport of the document so suddenly produced, inquired of the witness whether he received it directly of the party whose signature was appended, and then submitted it to his fellows, the President said, in a tone of much satisfaction: "It appears to this court that unless any cause can be shown why credit should not be given to the confession of one Diego Alvaro, now produced, acknowledging the forgery of the document on which this prosecution is based, the whole charge brought against William Baron of Hardfels falls to the ground, and he is adjudged altogether innocent of the crime of which he is accused! How say you, Conrad Würmer? do you object to the admission of the deposition, in which, it appears, your name is mentioned as an accomplice?"

No answer was made, and but a minute later and young Würmer would have made a precipitate exit from the court. The Emperor, however, observing his movements, called to his guards to arrest him, and the gleaming halberds of the muscular soldiers soon frightened the wretched Conrad into submission.

"My Lord President," continued the Emperor, a smile of joy

illuminating his noble countenance, "and you, my worthy counsellors, one task has been accomplished in direct conformity with justice, and in a most satisfactory manner to myself. One other thing remains to be performed, and then your arduous labours are brought to a close. I impeach the witnesses, on whose testimony the late prosecution was founded, of deliberate perjury; and I leave it to you to decide whether such is the case."

"And I," said a tall, well-formed man, in the attire of a forester, "lay a further charge against Conrad Würmer, of having, by subtle machinations, encompassed the life of Augustus Count of Staelburg, whom you have lately seen and heard!"

"And who may you be, to make so bold an assertion?" said the Emperor.

"I am known as Albert the brigand," replied the sturdy outlaw,—“a man at present under the ban of the empire, and who, had it not been for my proscription, might have made a similar charge in my own name. In proof of my charge, I tender a writing, bearing the name of the accused.”

Maximilian smiled at the brigand's fearless manner. "You are free," said he, "to give your evidence in the cause; and in consideration of the confidence you have placed in me, I revoke the ban under which you were laid." Then turning to the judges of the court, he continued: "Since no objection lies to the admission of the confession you allude to, I think the decision you have arrived at is, that the Baron of Hardfels is a good man and a loyal subject, and, as such, is entitled to his release without the least aspersion being cast on his honour by the late proceedings—is it not so?"

The President bowed assent.

"I need make no further comment at present. Hardfels, you are a free man, and many apologies are due to you for the restraint in which you have been placed; tarry, however, until the termination of the next case, which, I trust, may not be a long one, and then I shall have a better opportunity of inquiring into this mystery."

The Baron showed no sign of triumph—no tendency to enthusiastic joy was visible in his stoical appearance; but, never-

theless, there reigned in his full eye an expression of silent thankfulness. He was about to pour forth his acknowledgments to the Emperor, but, at a signal from his sovereign, desisted. A warm grasp of the hand of his faithful counsellor showed how deep was the gratitude he felt towards him, and then all seemed as calm as if nothing had served to mar the serenity of his life. Reclining in the chair placed for him near the Emperor, he attended, without the slightest appearance of resentment, to the preparations which were making for the trial of his enemies.

"Conrad Count of Würmer, and you, Conrad Würmer, son of the before-named," said the President, "in the name of the Emperor and the States, you stand charged with having in this court committed deliberate and corrupt perjury, whereby the life of an innocent man was endangered; and you, Conrad Würmer, are further accused of plotting the destruction of Augustus Count of Staelburg, here present. What answer have you to make to these several articles, and have you any request to make touching the manner of your trial?"

The old Count trembled visibly as he, in the most moving manner, denied the least participation in the forgery of the letter, the whole blame of which he, in a right paternal fashion, ascribed to his son, but wisely forbore to allude to the false evidence he had given. The latter bestowed on his loving father a look of utter contempt. "I neither deny nor admit the facts mentioned in the declaration you refer to, nor the document lately produced by the robber. If you think fit to condemn me, let my doom be speedy. I require no assistance, and I demand none; neither have I any evidence to adduce. The old man's mind wanders: he speaks at random."

On a re-examination of the respective documents, the Count of Staelburg was again called upon to depose to the means by which he came into possession of the one previously adduced; and Albert gave a distinct account of the manner in which he acquired the other.

Unable to gainsay evidence such as this, Conrad Würmer preserved a dogged silence, and returned no answer to any questions put to him; and his disreputable father, seeing the

degree in which he was implicated, adopted a tone of abject humility, confessed his crime, and loudly demanded mercy.

Once more the judges deliberated; but on this occasion their decision was soon arrived at, and, amidst an appalling stillness, the President passed sentence. As for the younger Würmer, his case, he observed, admitted of no mitigating circumstances; his guilt, in both instances, was clear; and it became the duty of the court to doom him to death. By the confession of the father, no doubt would remain of his culpability; but, in consideration of his age and infirmities, the court, although deeming his case deserving of extreme punishment, submitted it to the Emperor, for him to decide what the fate of the prisoner should be.

Loud signs of applause greeted the noble speaker; and the Würmers, in their turn, became the objects of popular scrutiny. No sympathy was manifested towards them; and the assembly only awaited the Emperor's condemnation of the elder culprit.

Würmer sneered scornfully, as he looked round the court—not to excite commiseration, for such he loathed, but to call all to witness his imperturbability. His father presented an appearance of most perfect despair, as he stood, with clenched hands and staring eyes, in expectation of his doom.

"Prisoners," said the Emperor, an emphasis *malgré* himself being attached to the word, "you have been severally convicted of the charges brought against you. As to you, Conrad Wurmer, your guilt being proved, I have only to state that I fully concur in the sentence pronounced on you; but the fate of the Count being left in my hands, after taking into consideration the facts of the case, I fear I can work no great mitigation of the sentence of death, which his crime deserves."

A piercing scream broke from the miserable Count, and it was evident, from the vacant roll of his eyes and the wild expression of his mouth, that his reason had sunk before the shock."

"Poor wretch!" continued the pitying Emperor; "his reason seems gone; let him be placed in confinement, where he can be well cared after, and perhaps he may regain possession of his

faculties. As for the other prisoner, has he aught to say in arrest of judgment?"

"I give no mercy," said Conrad, ferociously, "and I ask none; neither would I accept it, if offered. I have played a deep game; and have been unsuccessful, and therefore do not object to pay the penalty with my blood. The only boon I crave is, that the execution of my sentence may be speedy. Death has no torments for the resolute. Stay!" he continued: "that it may be said of me that I did one thing savouring of good, touch a spring at the bottom of the case in which I kept my neighbour Hardfels' letter,"—pointing to the article alluded to,—“and you will see a drawer, in which is a thing of some importance to a person here present. The miniature is that of one Matilda Haldenheim, whose son yon old idiot most shamefully defrauded. I might name the injured party; but I will disclose no more."

"Take him away!" said the Emperor, horrified at his apathy; "and do not fail to let him be attended by some minister of religion."

Würmer loudly laughed at this charitable injunction, and then, with a mock reverence to the court, suffered himself to be conducted, by an escort of the Emperor's guard, to the cell for the condemned; while the aged Count was removed to the apartment lately occupied by Hardfels, preparatory to his entering an institution for the insane.

When the council-chamber was rid of the crowd, the judges withdrew, having previously offered their hearty congratulations to the Baron of Hardfels on the issue of the trial; while a no less warm greeting took place between the newly liberated noble and him to whose exertions he owed his release. William of Hardfels, after having given vent to his delight in various eccentric manners, gently complained of the deception which his friend had practised in withholding from him the secret with which he was acquainted. A brief explanation of Staelburg's motives banished the assumed pique of the heir of Hardfels, and he added his warm thanks to those of his grateful father for the essential services rendered him. It was indeed a happy meet-

ing; and Herman Von Staelburg, as he grasped his nephew's hand, could not but feel an uncle's pride.

"Ah, my Augustus," said he, "you see that all our skilful arguments have not nearly so much effect as your more matter-of-fact way of deciding a question! But, jesting apart, my lad, I rejoice to see you well, and, after so many perils, preserved to tread the free soil of our mother country."

Ere our hero could reply to his relative's friendly salutation, his attention was diverted from the subject by the production by the Emperor of the miniature he had extracted from Würmer's casket, and which, in the excitement occasioned by recent events, had been almost overlooked.

"Who can recognise these features?" said Maximilian, as he displayed the portrait to the gaze of the few persons who remained in the court.

For some time no one ventured an opinion; until Karl, who had attentively regarded it, exclaimed, with an eagerness which not even the presence of the Emperor could check, "My mother! I cannot be mistaken."

"By what name are you known, good youth?" said the Emperor, in a condescending manner.

Poor Karl's head swam, and it required some few seconds to rouse him to consciousness. At length he responded: "Ask others, my liege; I can only speak of the subject of yon miniature as a parent: her name was only recalled to me by the allusion made by the doomed Würmer."

"To whom, then, am I to look for an explanation?" remarked Maximilian.

This question was answered by the Count of Staelburg, who respectfully informed his sovereign that a lady, known by the name of Matilda Haldenheim, the widow of a wealthy landed proprietor, some fourteen years since, was reported to have died, committing her son, then little more than an infant, to the care of the old Count of Würmer; that, soon after, the child disappeared, or, at least, all tidings of him ceased; and that, thereupon, the faithless Würmer appropriated his property to his own use; and added his belief of Karl's identity with the missing lad.

"Of what age are you? and what Christian name do you say you bear?" inquired the monarch of Karl.

On receiving a satisfactory answer, the Emperor proceeded to say: "It appears to me, by the conviction of the Würmers, their possessions are forfeited to me, as the head of the State; and as I have little doubt that many of them are your property, I see no other method of adjusting matters than by dividing the estates of the condemned criminals between the worthy Count of Staelburg, the Baron of Hardfels, and yourself, as the parties most injured by these Würmers,—leaving it to you to make such division as may appear just."

Hardfels and Staelburg, with similar expressions of gratitude, simultaneously resigned every claim the imperial bounty might bestow upon them, in favour of the bewildered Karl, in whose behalf the excellent monarch ratified their resignations, observing: "You have my best wishes, young sir, for your prosperity and happiness in your restored position; but for so large a property a plain name scarce suffices. Kneel," he whispered; after which he added: "Arise, Sir Karl Haldenheim, and use your riches to better purpose than their late owner."

The unostentatious Emperor checked his thanks by turning to the Count of Staelburg, and politely inquired if he had not the pleasure of beholding one of his trusty subjects but lately returned to the realm.

"You are right, my liege! I have recently entered your dominions, and I at once repaired to your palace to present my humble thanks for the benefits your Majesty has so lavishly conferred on me. Accept, sire, my apologies for presenting myself before you in so soiled a garb."

"Tush!" said the Emperor. "Justice is blind, and considers not the persons, but the causes, of her votaries: no apologies are needed for entering into the presence of your monarch, who is proud of the society of his trusty friends in any attire. But let us know the circumstances attending your absence, into which my tattling jester has given me some insight, although how he obtained the information, I know not."

At his sovereign's bidding, the young noble proceeded to

apprise him of the facts of the exile; but notwithstanding his studied reserve with respect to Hardfels' share in the matter, the Emperor contrived to elicit the real state of the case from him.

When he had concluded, the Emperor laid his hand mildly on the abashed Baron, and said: "Hardfels, my friend, was I such a tyrant in your estimation, that you preferred to make a sacrifice of your daughter and her hopes, rather than to trust all to my judgment? Your suspicion of me has brought you into jeopardy, and has produced pain in noble hearts: henceforth, act with greater confidence to me, and spare me the compunctions of conscience I to-day experienced. 'Obsta principia,' my worthy counsellor."

At this ingenuous speech, the Baron's lip twitched uneasily, and at length, unable to preserve his composure, he fairly burst into tears.

"There is yet one thing else to which I would allude," answered the Emperor: "this stout fellow"—pointing to Albert—"has displayed great earnestness in the cause of the right, and it is not fitting he should go without his reward. Say what can I do for you, my sturdy friend?"

"Your Majesty has already been more merciful to me than I deserve," answered Albert, frankly; "but during my proscription, I have contracted habits which ill associate with refined life. I fear that I should shine in no other capacity than a destroyer of deer. I have, moreover, a band of daring fellows under my control, who would consider my acceptance of any other appointment a desertion of them."

"Retain your roving habits, honest forester," replied the Emperor. "Do not quit your faithful followers: he who is faithful and true of speech can possess no depraved heart. The position of ranger of my forests is vacant; accept it, and let your associates occupy subordinate posts. Be as devoted in my service as you have been fearless in your own, and I am satisfied.—And now, my Godfrey," added he, turning to his jester, "in what way can I reward you for calling my attention to the danger menacing our worthy Count of Staelburg?"

"Most dread Liege and all-puissant Monarch," replied the

jester, turning his eyes towards his sovereign with an expression of most ludicrous humility, "contemplate the advantages of folly. Sitting near kings, often sharing their dignity with them, and presiding over their councils,—what can folly desire more? In fact, friend Maximilian, folly is above all remuneration, (certainly nothing but folly would decline it); and therefore I seek none. Listen to my ditty," continued he, as he sung, in a pleasant voice :

" See others and wiser
By rivalry rent;
With gossip and bauble
Behold me content;
For wisdom and wealth
But variance bring:
So, free from them both,
Of folly I sing."

"However exalted a position folly may bear in palace and court," said the Emperor, smiling at Godfrey's lay, "you must admit, Gossip Godfrey, that for once the Imperial Court has carried on its proceedings with no more folly attending them than that of which you are the owner. If we administer justice so wisely and speedily in all cases as in the present, you may as well resign your bauble. Folly will need no representative, on account of its holding supreme sway in person."

"And if I resign, it will be in your favour, my friend," replied Godfrey. But his words passed unnoticed, as the Emperor, courteously saluting Hardfels and his friends, quitted the council-chamber, beckoning to Godfrey to follow him.

When the little party of friends were left to themselves, the Baron turned to the Count of Staelburg, and said :

"What apologies are due to you, my noble-minded friend, for the pain and danger I have occasioned you? Believe me, however, I acted as much out of regard for you as for myself. I told you, if you remember, that the time might come when I should receive your thanks for my apparently unjustifiable conduct. The enemy from whom I sought to preserve both you and myself can no more cause us alarm. You may now appre-

ciate my motives, and pardon me. I fear you will miss one fond face, whose absence from our circle is in consequence of some conspiracy of our common enemy. Would that she could be restored to us, and then would my cup of happiness be full!"

Notwithstanding Staelburg's sympathy with the father's feelings, he could not forbear from a smile, as he looked to Albert for an explanation.

"Excuse me, my lord," said Albert; "persons lost have been found, and it is not improbable that, by the time you reach Kielsworth, a stranger may be visible."

"God be thanked!" observed the Baron, heaving a deep sigh, "if I may be allowed again to behold my dearest daughter. But permit me to ask, what plot led to her abduction?"

"Of this we will speak hereafter," said the Count. "Suffice it now to say that, having been concerned in a plot to deceive you, I waive my right to demand any further explanation of your proceedings; and henceforth let bygones be bygones."

"With all my heart!" said Hardfels. "Let us now repair to Kielsworth, and test the accuracy of your friend's assertion. My friend Herman, Sir Karl, and you, Albert, will accompany us."

The two former accepted the invitation; but Albert, pleading the necessity of his presence to perfect certain arrangements, started in advance; and soon the late crowded court was without an occupant.

CHAPTER XXV.

In which, according to established practice, a happy Conclusion is brought to our Tale.

By the time the Baron and his friends reached Kielsworth, they were met by Albert, who heartily welcomed the former to the home of his ancestors. There was no need of a blast of the horn to summon the porter to admit the party. All the domestics were assembled in the courtyard, and their cheerful faces and respect-

ful acclamations testified their joy at the return of their lord. As the Baron addressed some kind word to each, he hurried onwards to the door of his mansion, which was opened by his long-lost daughter ; and Bertha, half smiling, half weeping, was locked in her father's arms. A tear stood in Hardfels' eye, as he kissed his daughter's fair forehead, and invoked a blessing on her head. The happy father would not, however, monopolise all Bertha's affections, and a lover-like greeting took place between the delighted Staelburg and his blushing mistress. The introduction of Herman Von Staelburg, and Karl in his new character, was accomplished in due form ; and then Hardfels insisted on Albert's giving an account of the *ruse* practised.

The Ranger—such we may now term our old acquaintance—gave a clear explanation of the means by which he deceived the crafty Würmers, and added, that as the intelligence of her father's arrest, which he was unable to conceal from Bertha, had rendered her extremely anxious as to his fate, he had confided her to the care of Kaisa at Staelburg Castle, whence, on learning the intention of the Baron to return homewards, he had brought her to Hardfels. The happy means which resulted in the Baron's acquittal were, of course, not withheld.

A very cheerful time was spent at Hardfels Castle by the now united family, and their pleasure was intruded upon by no sorrow.

An early day was appointed for the marriage of Bertha with our young hero, and the ceremony was performed by Father Clement, in the presence of numerous friends of both families ; and, in addition to a handsome dowry with his daughter, the Baron bestowed on his son-in-law several valuable estates which had belonged to his father, and which, the generous donor insisted, were the fruits of his economy in the management of Staelburg's property.

To conclude in the orthodox manner observed by most writers of fiction, from infantine productions upwards, we may add, that Staelburg Castle was the scene of much happiness, and that great unity prevailed between its proprietor and the new Lord of Rockenforth. We cannot forbear from informing the reader

that our punctilious acquaintance, the steward, made a warm appeal in favour of the employment of a special chaplain to attend to the spiritual wants of the family, quoting for his authority the example of all the previous owners of the estate ; but as Staelburg's reverence for many of the dignitaries of the Romish Church had been much shaken by the clear view his exile had given him of them, good Father Clement took up his residence alternately at either place, and gave great satisfaction.

In justice to ourselves, we must further state, that so much did their lord's adventures interest both Kaisa and the steward, that, from the time of his return, all tales, however relating to Maurice or Adelbert de Staelburg, invariably terminated with an allusion to Augustus "the Exile;" and that it is only owing to our exertions that the legend of Adolphus of Hurlzbad was rescued from oblivion.

Würmer underwent his fate with the same sullenness which had marked him during his trial, being, however, considerably cheered by the news that a similar doom awaited his ally Ruffo, who had been arrested for some murder he had committed. As to the old Count, he spent the remainder of his days in a house of Bethlehem, occasionally, in his ravings, horrifying his attendants by the revelation of some deed of oppression or cruelty.



